

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at County Hall, Glenfield and via skype on Friday, 22 May 2020.

PRESENT

Mr. N. J. Rushton CC (in the Chair)

Mr. R. Blunt CC
Mr. L. Breckon JP CC
Mr. I. D. Ould OBE CC
Mr. B. L. Pain CC

Mr. T. J. Pendleton CC
Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC
Mrs H. L. Richardson CC
Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC

In attendance

Mrs. D. Taylor CC, Mr. O. O'Shea CC, Mrs. C. M. Radford CC, Dr. T. Eynon CC, Mr. S. J. Galton CC.

406. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2020 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

407. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

408. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting. He and Mr. Breckon CC, Mr. Blunt CC, Mrs. Richardson CC, and Mr. Shepherd CC declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 (a) (Coronavirus (Covid-19) Impact and Response of the County Council) as members of district councils.

409. Coronavirus (Covid-19) Impact and Response of the County Council.

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Public Health regarding the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and work being undertaken by the County Council and its partners to respond to this. A copy of this report and two supplementary reports, circulated separately, marked 'Agenda Item 4', are filed with these minutes.

Having noted the original report, the Cabinet considered the supplementary reports -

Supplementary Report (a) Coronavirus (Covid-19) Impact and Response of the County Council

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Chief Executive and Service Directors which advised of the work being undertaken within the County Council and with partners to address the impact of the coronavirus (Covid-19) within the County.

Members noted comments of Dr. T. Eynon CC on behalf of the Labour Group, a copy of which is filed with these minutes.

In introducing the report officers informed Members that the number of cases of Covid-19 in Leicestershire had decreased and plateaued, and was below the East Midlands and national averages, but in line with other East Midlands' counties; seven of the Council's Recycling and Household Waste Sites had re-opened and had generally operated well; the situation regarding the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) had eased, and the Council had a clear understanding of the needs of care homes and other domiciliary providers. Care homes would be prioritised for testing, especially those where staff were isolating. Recovery work would include a review of ways of working and optimising use of digital technology in line with the Council's environmental commitments.

Mr. Rushton CC commended Labour and Liberal Democrat members for supporting the establishment of a cross-party working group on recovery.

With the permission of the Chairman, Dr. Eynon CC asked whether he, as Leader of the Council, would issue a statement similar to that of the Leicester City Mayor with regard to schools reopening. The Chairman referred the matter to Mr. Ould, who said that he was content for schools in the County to use their own judgement as to when it was safe to open and the Council would continue to support them as needed.

Mr. Pendleton CC noted that a report on school transport arrangements would be considered by the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in September.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the actions taken to date in response to COVID-19 be noted;
- (b) That thanks be conveyed to the Sichuan Provincial People's Government for its donation of 20,000 face masks;
- (c) That the work that has commenced on recovery be noted and the establishment of the cross-party member working group with the terms of reference as set out in Appendix B to the report be approved.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

To note the current position on the response to the coronavirus pandemic and to agree the establishment of a cross-party member working group to provide high-level direction and political perspective to the County Council's Recovery Plans.

Supplementary Report (b) Coronavirus (Covid-19) Financial Implications

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources regarding the expected financial implications of the coronavirus (Covid-19) and the measures being put in place to monitor and minimise the impact.

In introducing the report, the Director said that as well as the additional costs incurred, the Council would suffer badly from the predicted loss of income from Business Rates and Council Tax. He highlighted the increased costs related to meeting demand for Special Education Needs and Disabilities and highlighted the comprehensive package of support provided by the County Council to care homes. A report would be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting in September with further details of the financial implications of the pandemic.

Mr. Rhodes CC echoed the comments made by the Director regarding the gravity of the financial situation and added that additional funding was needed from the Government to cover the increased costs associated with Covid-19. He added that the letter referred to in recommendation (c) had been sent to Members of Parliament seeking their support.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the increasingly serious financial position facing the County Council and the measures in place to monitor and minimise the impact be noted;
- (b) That the district councils, as collection authorities, be asked to provide the County Council as soon as possible with accurate, updated council tax collection figures;
- (c) That the County Council's financial position be drawn to the attention of Members of Parliament with a request that they advocate with Ministers the measures set out in this report to ensure the stability of the County Council and its ability to provide front line services, whilst noting that the ongoing pressures on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities budget exacerbate the financial concerns;
- (d) That the support given to providers of adult social care and that further support will be provided, as set out in the report, be noted.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

To note the Council's financial position, both in the short and medium term, which will inform decisions on future service delivery and discussions with Cabinet Members and MPs in securing monetary resources to safeguard the ongoing financial viability of the County Council, and local government in general.

410. Country Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2019 - 2029.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources regarding the outcome of the consultation on the Country Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2019-2029 and seeking approval for the final Strategy. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda item 5', is filed with these minutes.

Mr. Rhodes CC commended officers for the development of the Strategy and highlighted the importance of Country Parks and Open Spaces for communities as the lockdown due to Covid-19 was lifted. Mr. Pain CC noted that the Strategy would underpin the

Environment Strategy and support the Council to meet its commitment for carbon neutrality in its own operations by 2030.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the comments of the Scrutiny Commission on the draft Strategy, and changes made as a result, be noted;
- (b) That the Country Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2019 – 2029 be approved.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The Country Parks and Open Spaces Strategy has been developed to give a strategic direction to developments, including maintenance and preservation, within country parks in Leicestershire over the next ten years.

411. Leaders Farm Development Proposal.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning the development proposals for the Leaders Farm site near Lutterworth and seeking approval for the allocation of resources to support the associated planning application, design team fees and construction costs. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda item 6', is filed with these minutes.

The Director, in introducing the item, reminded members that the report set out the plans and views of the Council as a landowner and developer only. It was recognised that part of the proposal did not accord with allocated planning use for the site, and the scheme would be subject to consideration by the relevant Planning Authority (to be confirmed), including full public consultation.

Mr. Rhodes CC said that he had reviewed the proposal and was satisfied that it was a good investment and gave a good rate of return.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Option 2 for development of the Leaders Farm site as set out in paragraph 26 of the report be approved, namely
 - i. two Drive Thru restaurant units
 - ii. a 50,000 sq ft light industrial unit (subject to successful negotiations with the proposed tenant)
 - iii. further light industrial units on the remainder of the site (at an appropriate time in the future, subject to wider market assessment of the need for such units);
- (b) That £8.2m be allocated from the Corporate Asset Investment Fund for the development of the Leaders Farm Site as set out in (a) above;
- (c) That the Director of Corporate Resources, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member, be authorised to undertake all necessary preparatory work to enable the submission of a planning application for the proposed development.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The development of the Council-owned land will support the delivery of both new business accommodation and income generating assets.

Having reviewed the various options available to the Council, Option 2 presents the best projected return for the capital invested based on current information.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

A further three options were set out in the report:

Option 1 - Develop the entire site including the Drive Thru units and the Light Industrial Units. This would require a capital contribution of approximately £7.95m.

Option 3 - Develop the site with the Drive Thru units, the unit for the potential occupier and dispose of the remaining land. This would require a capital investment of approximately £6.44m but would be offset by a £6m capital receipt from the occupier and possibly a capital receipt in the region of £750,000 from the sale of the remaining land.

Option 4 - In the event the occupier interest does not come to fruition, to develop the Drive Thru units and dispose of the remaining land. This would require a capital contribution of approximately £3m offset by a land sale of potentially £1.75m.

412. Leicestershire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020-23.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which sought agreement for the Leicestershire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020-2023 to be submitted to the County Council for approval. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 7', is filed with these minutes.

Members noted comments from Mr. Max Hunt CC, on behalf of the Labour Group, a copy of which is filed with these minutes.

Mr. Ould CC highlighted the benefits of a whole-family approach and in working with partners to support children with the most complex needs. He supported the actions included in the Plan to address criminal exploitation of children and young people.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the comments of the Scrutiny Commission on the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020-2023, be noted;
- (b) That the County Council at its meeting on 8 July 2020 be recommended to approve the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020-2023.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The County Council has a statutory duty under Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to produce an annual Youth Justice Plan. Following guidance issued by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) in 2015, the Youth Offending Service Management Board (YOSMB) was able to choose whether to develop a one or three-year Plan. The new Plan will cover a three-year period with annual updates being provided to the YOSMB and YJB, so reducing the burden on the Youth Offending Service.

The Youth Justice Board may request the Youth Offending Service to undertake further reviews of the Plan before it is next refreshed in 2021 to ensure that it reflects changes in priorities and budget.

413. Dates of Council Meetings 2020-21 and 2021-22.

The Cabinet received a report of the Chief Executive regarding the proposed dates of Council meetings for the next two years. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 8", is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the County Council be recommended to hold meetings on the following dates during the next two municipal years:-

Wednesday 30 September 2020

Wednesday 2 December 2020

Wednesday 17 February 2021 (to consider the budget)

Wednesday 19 May 2021 (Annual Meeting)

Wednesday 7 July 2021

Wednesday 29 September 2021

Wednesday 1 December 2021

Wednesday 23 February 2022 (to consider the budget)

Wednesday 18 May 2022 (Annual meeting)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

To comply with the Local Government Act 1972 and the County Council's Standing Orders.

414. Items referred from Overview and Scrutiny.

There were no items referred from Overview and Scrutiny.

11.00 am - 12.20 pm
22 May 2020

CHAIRMAN