

COUNCIL

13 DECEMBER 2022

PRESENT:

Councillors Greatorex (Chair), Anketell, Baker, Ball, Banevicius, Checkland, Cross, Eadie, Eagland, D Ennis, L Ennis, Evans, Grange, Gwilt, Ho, Lax, Leytham, Marshall, Matthews, Norman, Powell, Ray, Robertson, Salter, Silvester-Hall, Smith, Spruce, Taylor, Mrs Tranter, Strachan, Warfield, Westwood, White, M Wilcox, S Wilcox, A Yeates and B Yeates

14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Barnett, Birch, Cox, D Cross, Humphreys, A Little, E Little, Parton-Hughes, Pullen and Warburton.

15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

16 TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes were approved subject to an amendment to the apologies for absence.

17 TO RECEIVE THE RETURNING OFFICER'S CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR AND REPORT OF DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The Returning Officer certified that Paul Taylor had been duly elected District Councillor for Chasetown Ward and had signed his declaration of acceptance of office.

18 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Remembrance Services

The Chair thanked those who attended and supported the remembrance service held jointly by Lichfield Cathedral, the District Council and City Council in November.

He also drew attention to the service held by the National Arboretum which involved a royal visit from the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester.

Lichfield Carol Service

The Chair commented that there had been a good reaction to the joint carol service attended by Members Lichfield City Council and Lichfield District Council on 6 December 2022.

Easy IT

The Chair informed members that a charity fundraising event would be held on 13 January 2023 for his chosen charity, Easy IT.

19 REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL ON CABINET DECISIONS FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2022 (TO FOLLOW) AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS.

Councillor Eadie submitted a report on Cabinet Decisions from the meeting held on 6 December 2022 and Cabinet Member Decisions.

Councillor Robertson commended the Cabinet decision on providing additional resources for homelessness prevention. He asked that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities be requested to review the policy of freezing local housing allowance considering the increasing interest rates and housing costs.

Councillor Ball reminded Council that he had requested that the council's trading company provide social housing for rent, which was much needed in the district.

20 MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor M Wilcox submitted the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 November 2022.

Councillor Norman shared concerns on the item on dual stream recycling and commented that a better communication plan was needed including information on the council's website and social media. Councillor M Wilcox agreed that going forward this would need to be improved.

Councillor Ray asked council for better commitment to task groups. He said there was insufficient involvement and suggestions raised were not being implemented.

Councillor Robertson recalled that a request had been for the Leader to ensure his cabinet members attended Overview and Scrutiny to provide information and be challenged.

Councillor Wilcox agreed that task groups needed to be utilised effectively.

Councillor Ray commented on the on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and asked that council be sensitive when setting the level of council tax due to the cost-of-living crisis that was facing residents.

Councillor Strachan responded that council had to be fiscally responsible, but would do everything it could to make things as easy as possible for residents who were struggling. He noted that a new council tax support scheme would be brought to council for consideration by the end of the council year.

21 MINUTES OF THE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

It was proposed by Councillor Matthews, seconded by Councillor S Wilcox and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2022 be approved and adopted.

22 MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

It was proposed by Councillor Marshall, seconded by Councillor Baker and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Planning Committee held on 31 October and 5 December 2022 be approved and adopted.

23 MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND MEMBER STANDARDS COMMITTEE

It was proposed by Councillor Spruce, seconded by Councillor Silvester-Hall and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2022 be approved and adopted.

24 ALLOCATION OF SEATS AND APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

It was proposed by Councillor Eadie and seconded by Councillor Powell "that the Membership of Cabinet, Committees and Panels including the allocation of seats and appointments by Political Groups as submitted be approved."

RESOLVED: (1) That the political allocation of seats on Committees and Panels be approved.

(2) That the list of appointments to the Cabinet, committees and panels be approved.

25 QUESTIONS

Questions under Procedure Rule 11.2 for Council

Q1. Question from Councillor Norman to the Leader of the Council

"Under The Elections Bill, the Government is changing voting rules which will apply to the District Council elections in May next year and will mean many voters having to reapply for postal votes and all voters to provide photo ID at Polling Stations in order to exercise their right to vote in person so can I ask the Leader how many cases of personation there have been in Lichfield District since its creation in 1974?"

Response from the Leader of the Council

"Our records date back to 2004, during which time we have 0 recorded cases".

Supplementary Question from Councillor Norman to the Leader of the Council

"In 2019 there were no impersonations in Staffordshire or anywhere in the UK. Does the Leader/Deputy Leader agree with me that photo ID is not needed, and the conservatives can still comply with their manifesto commitment by having a requirement for ID but no photo ID."

Response from the Deputy Leader of the Council

"As I understand it this council will look to implement the rules that are handed down to it and I will look to the Chief Executive and the electoral team to understand how we do that best."

Q2. Question from Councillor Norman to the Leader of the Council

“As he has publicly accepted responsibility for the poor publicity and advice given to residents around the introduction of the dual-stream recycling system earlier this year, can he tell me what action he has taken since the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 17th of November that considered the problems surrounding its implementation?”

Response from the Leader of the Council

“As Leader of the Council, I take the principle of accountability incredibly seriously. Since November, my Cabinet colleague Cllr Little and our Assistant Director Sharna Quirke have been working to rectify the issues that O&S highlighted, and are making good progress in doing so.”

Supplementary Question from Councillor Norman to the Leader of the Council

“The Deputy Leader heard me earlier when I sought support from the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee for improving communications with the dual-stream recycling service. Can he give me any example of progress in this in regard to publicity or advice since that meeting on the 17th November?”

Response from the Deputy Leader of the Council

“I cannot personally stand here and do that so I will take the matter away in conjunction with the Chief Executive, the Leader and the relevant portfolio holder.”

Q3. Question from Councillor Gwilt to the Cabinet Member for Engagement

“What is the council doing to warn it’s residents about the current crime wave that is happening in the district regarding thefts?”

Response from the Cabinet Member for Engagement

“While Lichfield District has low crime levels relative to nearby conurbations, there has been a noticeable increase in vehicle thefts across our communities. Our new Community Safety lead, Yvonne James, is taking a highly-visible, proactive approach to this, and has already undertaken several Community Safety events across the district. These events are taking place in various locations and include the Community Safety Team, Police, Fire Service and Lichfield Crime Prevention panel. At these events we are advising the public how best to keep themselves safe, ways of reducing the likelihood of becoming a victim of crime and how to keep your vehicle secure. We have secured funding from the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and have purchased large numbers of Faraday pouches along with property marking kits, purse bells and information packs - and have secured discounts for residents with Halfords and Lichfield Lock and Key on security purchases. We have already done events in Elford, Clifton Campville, Hallam Park, Roman Heights, Market Square, Tesco and Waitrose this year, and are in the process of arranging events across Burntwood, Armitage and Handsacre, and other villages in the New Year. The Community Safety Partnership is all about looking at current trends and taking action in order to help the public, prevent and reduce crime and Anti-Social Behaviour.”

Supplementary Question from Councillor

“I have just been a victim of crime which has impacted my business, when I posted this on Facebook I had messages from people who have had these issues happen throughout the district. Is there something more that we can do as a council to help people in the district? When

I spoke to the commander, he said that we have a problem and would need help and support from the council.”

Response from the Deputy Leader of the Council

“I hope that the answers he has been given provides him with reassurance that work is ongoing with this council, connecting with all the outside agencies as well, to do what we can to support those who are victims of crime.”

26 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: “That as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, which would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972”

IN PRIVATE

27 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor M Wilcox submitted the confidential Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 November 2022.

(The Meeting closed at 6.35pm)

CHAIRMAN