

Public Document Pack

COUNCIL

9 JULY 2024

PRESENT:

Councillors Anketell, Ashton, Ball, Bennion, Booker, Bragger, Checkland, Coe, Cox, Cross, Farrell, D Ennis, L Ennis, Galvin, Harvey-Coggins, Hawkins, Henshaw, Hill, Ho, Holland, Hughes, Marshall, Mears, Norman, Pullen, Ray, Rushton, Salter, Silvester-Hall, A Smith, Strachan, P Taylor, S Taylor, Trent, Vernon, Warfield, Whitehouse, Woodward and B Yeates

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)

Apologies were received from Cllr Banevicius, Cllr Evans, Cllr Leung, Cllr Powell, Cllr Robertson MP, Cllr J. Smith, Cllr M Wilcox and Cllr S Wilcox.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Cox and Cllr Silvester-Hall both declared an interest in Item 11 (Amendment to the Constitution: Code of Joint Working Arrangements - Health Scrutiny) as sitting members of Staffordshire County Council.

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

The minutes of the previous meeting, held 24th May 2024, were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

4 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE ENSUING YEAR (FOLLOWED BY DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE)

The Leader, Councillor Pullen, nominated Councillor Vernon. This was seconded by Councillor Cox.

Councillor Ray nominated Councillor Rushton. This was seconded by Councillor Woodward.

RESOLVED: Following a vote, Councillor Andrew Rushton was elected as Vice-Chair of Lichfield District Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor Rushton signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and thanked Members for his appointment as Vice-Chair.

Thanks were given to Councillor Holland for his work as Vice-Chair of council.

5 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair paid tribute to former Councillor Doris English on the event of her death. Members were invited to pay tribute and commemorate her life.

The Chair passed good wishes on to Councillor Dave Robertson following his election as the Member of Parliament for the Lichfield constituency.

6 MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Cllr Ball suggested an amendment to the final sentence of the section on Lichfield City Masterplan Task Group notes, clarifying that the leader and chief executive had shared the plans mentioned with him before UKREiiF, and that he had then discussed this with task group members.

It was proposed by Cllr Norman, seconded by Cllr Holland and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 06 June 2024 be approved and adopted.

7 MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

It was proposed by Cllr Harvey-Coggins, seconded by Cllr Ashton and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2024 be approved and adopted.

8 MEMBERSHIP OF CABINET, COMMITTEES, PANELS AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS

The following changes were proposed by the Leader and duly seconded by Cllr A. Smith:

- Cllr Marshall to replace Cllr M. Wilcox on the Investigatory & Disciplinary Committee.
- Cllr Warfield to replace Cllr Holland on the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED: That the appointments to the Cabinet, Committees and Panels as set out be approved.

9 ELECTION OF CHAIRS AND APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES, PANELS ETC.

The following changes were proposed by the Leader and duly seconded by Cllr A. Smith:

- Cllr Marshall to replace Cllr Ho as Vice-Chair of Audit Committee.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Marshall be appointed as the Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee.

10 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

It was proposed by the Leader that Councillor Carol Dean of Tamworth Borough Council be appointed to the joint Tamworth-Lichfield Stakeholder Governor position at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust.

Councillor Woodward stated that whilst she had no objections in principle to the appointment, a Lichfield District Councillor would be a preferable appointment.

Councillor Woodward proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Cox, to appoint Councillor Claire Booker as the council's representative to the role, if compatible with the University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust constitution.

This amendment was approved by Council.

RESOLVED: That subject to confirmation that this appointment is compatible with the University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust constitution, that the appointment of Representatives on Outside Bodies - as amended - be approved.

11 AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION: CODE OF JOINT WORKING ARRANGEMENTS - HEALTH SCRUTINY

The Leader proposed the 'Amendment to the Constitution: Code of Joint Working Arrangements - Health Scrutiny' to Council. This was seconded by Councillor Norman.

Councillor Woodward said she would like to see a further amendment that allowed District & Borough councils to ask Staffordshire County Council to carry out scrutiny of a local issue at county level.

Councillor Norman proposed an amendment at 3.9 (b)(2) to specify "the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee ***or nominee***" will be appointed..."

RESOLVED:

- That the updated Joint Working Arrangements with Staffordshire County Council – as amended – be endorsed.
- That the arrangements be referenced in the Constitution as set out at paragraph 3.9.

12 UPDATED PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024

The Leader proposed the 'Updated Pay Policy Statement 2024' to Council. This was seconded by Councillor A. Smith.

Councillor D. Ennis raised the apprentice pay scales within the report and asked council to examine how the authority pays its apprentices. Simon Fletcher (Chief Executive) confirmed to council that all apprentices in Lichfield District Council (LDC) and Lichfield West Midlands Trading Services (LWMTS) are paid the real living wage as a minimum. He confirmed the language in the report would be clarified before publication on the website.

Councillor Mears asked for further information on where apprentices are employed within the council. The Leader confirmed that apprentices sit across multiple different departments to provide the broadest possible experience of the organisation.

Cllr Trent asked if there was further information on coaches. It was agreed that this would be provided

RESOVLED:

- That Full Council approves the contents of the updated Pay Policy Statement 2024 as set out in Appendix A for publication.
- That Full Council delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer in consultation with the Chair of Employment Committee, to update and republish the pay policy in respect of the pay spine set out at Appendix A and any updated ratios once the national pay negotiations for 2024 are concluded.

13 QUESTIONS

Questions under Procedure Rule 11.2 for Council

Q1. Question from Councillor Woodward to the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy, Ecology & Climate Change

"When does the Cabinet Member intend to consult Councillors on the Lichfield District Visitor Strategy 2024-25?"

Response from the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy, Ecology & Climate Change

-
"The Lichfield District Visitor Strategy is in development, working closely with partners via the Visitor Economy Network. We are currently reviewing feedback from the Network to develop the next iteration, which we will look to share with Councillors for their feedback by September."

Councillor Woodward asked the following supplementary question:

Will the Cabinet member publish the list of consultees to all members and fix a firm and early date when members will be consulted on the policy?

The Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy, Ecology & Climate Change responded:

The list of consultees will be shared with members imminently. The strategy itself has evolved into a fairly significant piece of work that now has buy-in from those people intended to be delivering it.

-

Q2. Question from Councillor Harvey-Coggins to the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy, Ecology & Climate Change

-

"With the recent changes to cabinet personnel, can I ask for assurances, for the residents of Lichfield District, that this Council's commitment to the climate change emergency and its work toward achieving net zero carbon emissions remains a priority. And that the Climate Summit, planned for later this year in the Cathedral, is delivered with measurable outcomes and commitment to this important issue."

Response from the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy, Ecology & Climate Change

-
The Council remains fully committed to the climate change emergency and achieving net zero carbon emissions. Becoming the greenest district in the country is one of the four key priorities in our Lichfield District 2050 Strategy. The Strategy and associated Delivery Plan includes a series of key climate milestones and actions, including, restoring and increasing the district's biodiversity, increasing the scope and capacity of our recycling services and improving our green infrastructure.

Key to our commitment is our revised organisational Carbon Reduction Plan that I am taking the opportunity to review. This will be launched in the next month along with the new public version of our carbon dashboard, which we have developed to enable us to understand our baseline position from 2021 so that we can continue to make improvements and effectively monitor our progress.

The Climate Summit is still scheduled to take place and aims to engage both residents and businesses significantly. However, we are now recommending that we reschedule the summit to late Spring/Summer 2025. This decision follows research into a number of similar events and campaigns which highlighted that attendees often consisted of existing climate change advocates. To inspire a wider audience, including children and families who can drive behavioural changes at home, we are planning to have a series of engagements including

work in schools and smaller events across the district throughout Autumn, Winter, and Spring. The Summit we then hold will be the culmination of months of engagement, ideas and collaboration, providing the event with substantial content to further build on.

-
Councillor Harvey-Coggins asked the following supplementary question:

I am very disappointed to see the climate summit has been put back again. I am wondering how seriously this council takes the matter of climate change.

The Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy, Ecology & Climate Change responded:

I believe a lot of that has been covered in the reply that has been put over. As with anything that I am asked to pick up responsibility for I will give it my 100%. I look forward to meeting with the shadow cabinet member and equally what is planned and has been shared in the meantime. Hopefully, in the longer term we will have more opportunity to prepare for the climate change summit.

-
-

Q3. Question from Councillor Marshall to the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee

-
"Can the Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee please indicate to what extent this council's net zero strategy has been scrutinised by O&S, and has the Cabinet Member been invited to submit evidence relating to the strategy's efficacy, appropriateness and potential cost?"

Response from the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee

I will answer Councillor Marshall's question in 2 parts for the sake of clarity.

Can the Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee please indicate to what extent this council's net zero strategy has been scrutinised by O&S

By way of background I proposed the recognition of a Climate Emergency at the meeting of Council on the 10th of December 2019 and members agreed that:

'Lichfield District Council recognises that a climate change emergency exists and in consequence, resolves to take this into account as a factor in future decisions of the Council and accepts that specific actions are necessary and therefore resolves that it will:

- Support the Government's target of Net Zero Carbon Emission by 2050
- Actively consider investment in green technologies
- Ensure that, where appropriate, decisions made by the Council consider Environmental Impact
- Ask an Overview & Scrutiny Committee to investigate initiatives that will reduce our impact on the environment
- Name a specific Cabinet member for Climate Change'

I list below the *occasions showing scrutiny of the Council's decision to support working towards net zero carbon emissions carried out by members to date.*

- 1) At the first meeting of the new Overview and Scrutiny Committee on **the 15th of July 2021** members agreed the work programme and asked for information as to what actions and progress had been made by the Council since declaring a Climate Emergency. They noted that a briefing paper would be forthcoming and that this would be as soon as possible.
- 2) Members expressed disappointment to the Cabinet Member responsible for Climate Change at their next meeting, held on the **16th of September 2021**, that information on what had been undertaken so far had not been forthcoming. It was felt that as the Council had declared a Climate Change Emergency, it was getting time critical to have an action plan in place and meet the targets set by the Council. It was reported that the previous Chief Executive had taken the lead however due to the pressures faced during the pandemic, much had stopped. However there had been some improvements made including to Burntwood Leisure Centre. It was then reported that a new lead officer was appointed, following the departure of the chief executive, and a company called APSE to help gather baseline figures and work on an action plan. It was also reported that an Officer would be appointment on a two-year contract to lead on the matter as well as comprehensive training for other officers.
- 3) On the **7th of October 2021** O&S members received the Briefing Paper.
- 4) The Committee held on the **18th of November 2021** agreed to set up a Climate Emergency Task Group to be chaired by me and agreed the following: "To ensure the Council has a published and timetabled plan to get to net zero carbon emissions by 2050." With the key outcome being to, "Reach this target, ideally before this date, both within the Council's own activities and in the wider district with the support of its residents." This met on the **13th of December 2021** and agreed to invite a representative from Transition Lichfield and a representative from Whittington & Fisherwick Environmental Group because of their work and interest in this subject.
- 5) The Task Group met again on the **15 of March 2022** to consider the proposed Action Plan that was ongoing and developed post July last year following the receipt of the APSE report, which had been agreed by Leadership Team in January and which the leader and the cabinet member had also agreed it. The Task Group wanted to know when would the public and businesses be involved and how it would stand up to the Climate Emergency Action Plan Checklist that had been presented by me at the first meeting.
- 6) The Task Group met again on the **1st of February 2023** to question the newly appointed Cabinet Member responsible for Climate Change who was assisted by the Chief Executive.
- 7) An Internal Audit into the Council's report published that month listed a number of failures of progress and was only able to give a "limited assurance " 'judgement'.
- 8) The Climate Emergency Task Group met on **20th September 2023** to ask the newest (then) Cabinet Member for Climate Change to be asked a number of questions on the progress being made with the Action Plan and to hear his plans for his role.
- 9) He will see from the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny meeting held on the 6th of June and presented tonight that: "The Chair of the climate emergency task group agreed that the task group could be concluded now that the carbon dashboard was being implemented." The plan being to bring regular reports to the full Committee.

has the Cabinet Member been invited to submit evidence relating to the strategy's efficacy, appropriateness and potential cost?

Please see paragraphs 2, 5 and 8 that show we have been able to interview each of the Cabinet Members as they were appointed and were able to respond to the Briefing Paper submitted at 3. In addition, the last Cabinet Member had arranged additional presentations and briefings outside of Scrutiny but where I and other invited members were able to ask both he and officers a number of questions as to the Council's progress towards Net Zero.

-

14 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

15 TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Proposed by the Chair and seconded by Councillor Woodward. The confidential minutes of the previous meeting, held 24th May 2024, were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

(The Meeting closed at 7.36 pm)

CHAIR

This page is intentionally left blank