

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL HELD BY REMOTE VIDEO
CONFERENCE THURSDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2021 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM

PRESENT (BY REMOTE LINK)

Mrs L Eaton JP	Chair
Mrs L Kaufman	Vice-Chair



COUNCILLORS

Mrs R H Adams	
N Alam	
L A Bentley	
G A Boulter	
J W Boyce	Leader of the Council
Mrs L M Broadley	
F S Broadley	
D M Carter	
M H Charlesworth	Deputy Leader of the Council
M L Darr	
R F Eaton	
D A Gamble	
F S Ghattoraya	Deputy Leader of the Opposition
Mrs S Z Haq	
Miss P V Joshi	Leader of the Opposition
J Kaufman	
Miss A Kaur	
C D Kozlowski	
K J Loydall	
D W Loydall	
Mrs S B Morris	
Dr I K Ridley	

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE (BY REMOTE LINK)

S J Ball	Trainee Solicitor (acting as the Democratic Services Officer)
C Campbell	Head of Finance / Deputy Section 151 Officer
Mrs A E Court	Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service
Mrs P Fisher	Head of Customer Service & Transformation
D M Gill	Head of Law & Democracy / Monitoring Officer
Ms V Hewitt	People Manager
S Hinds	Deputy Chief Executive / Section 151 Officer
A Thorpe	Head of Built Environment
S Tucker	Democratic & Electoral Services Manager / Deputy Monitoring Officer

37. CALLING TO ORDER OF THE MEETING

The meeting of the Council was called to order to receive Her Worship The Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

A minute's silence was observed in memory of both the late former Councillor Jim Allen who passed away on 21 January 2021, and the late former Officer Jez Crooks who passed away on 16 January 2021.

38. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs H E Loydall and R E R Morris.

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

40. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 December 2020 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

41. ACTION LIST ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

There was no Action list arising from previous meeting held on 15 December 2020.

42. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

None.

43. PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

None.

44. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

44a. LIST OF OFFICIAL MAYORAL / DEPUTY MAYORAL ENGAGEMENTS

By affirmation of the meeting, it was:

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The continued suspension of all civic engagements undertaken by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic be noted.

In accordance with Rule 6.3 of Part 4 of the Constitution, the Mayor moved for the order of business to be altered and taken in the order as reflected in the minutes.

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The order of business be altered and taken accordingly.

45. COUNCIL TAX SETTING (2021/22)

The Council gave consideration to the report (as set out at pages 10 - 15 of the agenda reports pack) which asked it set and approve the amount of Council Tax for the Borough of Oadby and Wigston for 2021/22 in accordance with section 30(2) of the Local Government

Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011.

It was moved by the Leader of the Council and seconded by Councillor D A Gamble that the recommendations be put to the vote en bloc and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

- A. It be noted that under powers delegated to the Chief Finance Officer, the Council has calculated the amount of 17,558.7 as its Council Tax base for the financial year 2021/22 in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012.**
- B. It be noted that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2021/22 is £4,117,515.**
- C. The following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2021/22 in accordance with sections 30 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended):**
- (i) £34,464,259 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in section 31A(2) of the Act.**
- (ii) £30,346,744 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in section 31A(3) of the Act.**
- (iii) £4,117,515 being the amount by which the aggregate at C(i) above exceeds the aggregate at C(ii) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 31 A (4) of the Act, as its Council Tax Requirement for the year.**
- (iv) £234.50 being the amount at C(iii) divided by the amount at A above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 3 B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.**
- (v) Valuation Bands**

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Base Element of the 2021/22 Council Tax			
A	B	C	D
£	£	£	£
156.33	182.39	208.44	234.50
E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£
286.61	338.72	390.83	469.00

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at C(iv) above by the

number which, in the proportion set out in section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 36(1) of the Act, as the amount to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- D. It is noted that for the year 2021/22, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicester/shire, and the Leicester/shire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories shown below and that Leicestershire County Council have indicated that their provisional precept will be confirmed on 17 February 2021.

Precepting Authorities - Valuation Bands

Leicestershire County Council			
A	B	C	D
£	£	£	£
940.52	1,097.28	1,254.03	1,410.78
E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£
1,724.29	2,037.80	2,351.30	2,821.56

Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicester and Leicestershire			
A	B	C	D
£	£	£	£
165.49	193.07	220.65	248.23
E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£
303.39	358.55	413.72	496.46

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority			
A	B	C	D
£	£	£	£

46.19	53.89	61.59	69.29
E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£
84.69	100.09	115.48	138.58

- E. That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at C(v) and D above, the Council, in accordance with section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, set the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2021/22 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below.**

Valuation Bands

Total Council Tax Payable by - Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Residents			
A	B	C	D
£	£	£	£
1,308.53	1,526.63	1,744.71	1,962.80
E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£
2,398.98	2,835.16	3,271.33	3,925.60

In accordance with Rule 18.3.2 of Part 4 of the Constitution, as required by Regulation 4 and Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 (as amended), the names of the Members who casted a vote for the motion or against the motion or who abstained from voting were recorded as follows:

Votes For (24)	Votes Against (0)	Abstentions (0)
Mrs R H Adams		
N Alam		
L A Bentley		
G A Boulter		
J W Boyce		
Mrs L M Broadley		
F S Broadley		
D M Carter		
M H Charlesworth		
M L Darr		
R F Eaton		

Mrs L Eaton JP		
D A Gamble		
F S Ghattoraya		
Mrs S Z Haq		
Miss P V Joshi		
J Kaufman		
Mrs L Kaufman		
Miss A Kaur		
C D Kozlowski		
K J Loydall		
D W Loydall		
Mrs S B Morris		
Dr I K Ridley		

46. BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (2021/22)

The Council gave consideration to the report and appendices (as set out at pages 16 - 66 of the agenda reports pack) which asked it to approve the projected General Fund base budget position for 2021/22 based upon the Local Government Finance Settlement and consider the Capital Programme for 2021/22 (excluding carry forwards from 2020/21).

The report was commended by the Chair of the Policy, Finance and Development Committee, Councillor D A Gamble, and with reference to a presentation which provided Members with a number of headline budget statistics (as set out at slide 1). A written copy of the Chair's statement and the presentation is filed with these minutes.

It was moved by Councillor D A Gamble and seconded by Councillor Dr I K Ridley that the recommendations, as amended as proposed by Councillor Mrs S B Morris and seconded by Councillor Mrs L M Broadley, be put to the vote en bloc and

RESOLVED THAT:

- A. The Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2021/2022 (as set out in the report and at Appendix 1) be approved;**
- B. Council approves the levels of reserves (as set out at paragraph 5 of the report);**
- C. The Capital Programme (as set out at Appendix 2) be approved;**
- D. The Housing Revenue Account estimates for 2021/22 (as set out at Appendix 3) be approved;**
- E. The Scale of Fees & Charges for 2021/22 (as set out at Appendix 4) be approved;**
- F. Consultations be held involving all staff, inviting participation in shaping the future of the Council, through putting ideas forward on income**

generation and providing services differently and cost effectively;

- G. A report on the details of the proposed commercial charging regime for the Council's car parks and review of the refuse and recycling service be bought back to the next or subsequent meeting of the Full Council for consideration, approval or otherwise before any actions or decisions in relation to same are taken or implemented; and**
- H. A report in relation to staff long-term sickness be bought back to the next or subsequent meeting of either the Policy, Finance and Development Committee or the People Committee.**

Votes For	21
Votes Against	0
Abstentions	3

47. PAY POLICY STATEMENT (2021/22)

The Council gave consideration to the report and appendices (as set out at pages 67 - 77 of the agenda reports pack) which asked it to approve the Council's Pay Policy Statement and its continued commitment to paying the Real Living Wage for 2021/22.

It was moved by Councillor Mrs L M Broadley, seconded by Councillor K J Loydall and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

- A. The Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22 (as set out in Appendix 1) be approved; and**
- B. The continued commitment to paying the Real Living Wage for 2021/22 be approved.**

48. LEADER'S STATEMENT

The Leader of the Council presented a Statement outlining his recent work, the administration's plans, an overview of recent decisions taken since the previous meeting of the Council and an overview of the decisions likely to be taken in the future.

This included his summation of the current commentary surrounding the future of local government financial settlement, the need for income generation and cost controls, on service delivery, on staff resources, on the Customer Service Centre and the recent Customer Service Excellence Award, on future sustainability initiatives, on assets to generate income, on growth and development, on private/public sector opportunities and on the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

A written copy of the Leader's Statement is filed with these minutes.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.41 PM



Chair

Tuesday, 30 March 2021

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Council Offices, Station Road, Wigston, Leicestershire, LE18 2DR*

CHAIR'S STATEMENT

Full Council (Council Tax & Budget Setting (2021/22) etc.) |

Thursday, 18 February 2021

Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (2021/22)

As the Chair of the Policy, Finance and Development Committee, it is my pleasure to present the Council's budget for 2021/22. In short, it is very heartening that we are able to produce a balanced budget for 2021/22, and expect to be able to deliver the same in 2022/23, despite the government once again only announcing a single year settlement. Whilst it is pleasing, we have had to amend some of our long-standing wishes, in that we will be increasing our incredibly low car parking charges to generate much needed income, increase the charge for Garden Waste and review the most cost effective way of delivering our refuse and recycling services. If we do not do this, we would have two options - deplete our reserves to the point of exhaustion and/or cut services - neither is palatable or in keeping with delivering all that we can to our residents, businesses and partners.

The background to this budget has been one of unprecedented conditions, COVID has decimated income to the council, and put huge pressure on services to not only continue to provide services without alteration, but to deliver more to those who are in need. The pressure on our finances may not have been as great had the government not had a change of heart when they said at the start of the

pandemic that authorities would be no worse off. We have seen the significant impact of receiving some £500k less from government than the pandemic had cost us by November - but we have worked hard to mitigate this, and we are hoping to only draw down £250k from reserves to balance 2020/21.

The Government has promised over £200k to help against COVID impact for this budget, but as you'll see, we have had to estimate potential impacts above this of £500k - hopefully we will only scratch the service of the contingency, but if this year has shown us anything, it is that we have to plan for realism and not expect any sort of a fair "bail out".

Our reserves are not significant, we have around £1.2m of available reserves that we can utilise to mitigate risk and use to develop projects (above our minimum General Fund levels). This is stable, it isn't strong, nor is it very weak, but it is protection. We have seen our equivalent reserves drop from over £3.5m since 2014/15 until available reserve depletion petered out in 2017/18.

We cannot underestimate the impact the change in Central Government funding has had a detrimental impact upon the Council. When the last four-year spending review ended in 2019/20, the Council had seen a 30% drop in funding from Central Government in that period. The Settlement funding assessment for the first year of the review (in 2015/16) was £2.6m. The Settlement funding assessment for 2021/22 is £1.54m - a 41%. Over the same period, the Council Tax required to collect to balance the budget increased 22.5% (circa £800k). At the same time, the Council's Total revenue

budget has remained around £6.5m, meaning that the Council has met the funding gaps through improved income generation and efficient and effective working, whilst mitigating continual increases in costs and inflation. This is quite some achievement.

This budget shows that although we are small, we are nimble, efficient and can take action that deals with the challenges thrown at us and we are not afraid to make decisions, unlike many other organisations who may have significantly larger budgets and resource bases, cannot offer the stability this budget provides - we will not be one of those organisations, that to paraphrase Yates is "slouching towards Bethlehem".

I would like to thank all of the officers as a whole thanks not only to contributing to the development of this budget, generating income ideas and creating effective and efficient ways of delivering services enable the budget to balance, but for working their socks off in this truly unique year helping those in need and providing excellent services.





Councillor Dean A Gamble

Chair of the Policy, Finance and Development Committee

Dated: Thursday, 18 February 2021

HEADLINE BUDGET STATISTICS (2021/22)

Appendix 6

Area	2015/16	2021/22	Change	% Change	Direction of Travel	Note
Settlement Funding	£2.6m	£1.54m	£1.02m reduction	41% reduction		
Amount Raised by Council Tax	£3.38m	£4.14m	£0.76m increase	22% increase		
Revenue Budget	£6.5m	£6.5m (excluding COVID-19 mitigation)	Negligible	Negligible		Actual budget £7.082m with COVID-19 mitigation
Level of Useable Reserves	£3.5m	£1.2m	£2.3m	65% reduction		

LEADER'S STATEMENT

Full Council (Council Tax & Budget Setting (2021/22) etc.) |

Thursday, 18 February 2021

Leader's Statement

Let me start by thanking all staff for the exceptional response to the COVID-19 outbreak. I think our response has been excellent and I cannot thank our staff enough. Their work along with the many Councillors who stepped up, has significantly raised the reputation of this Council.

This council along with many others is facing a difficult future with many uncertainties. This statement is designed to underline the decisions taken tonight whilst acknowledging the challenges we face. Also, to look at the longer-term positives we and our residents can look forward to.

Income Generation

The Council will widen its charging for Car Parking in the Borough. It will endeavour to make the changes as pain free as possible for the residents, we will look at all the available options whilst ensuring we raise the revenue required. The scheme will be reviewed by members on an annual basis.

The Council has introduced a change to the charging for green waste, an additional charge of £10 per bin, plus £5 for additional bins starting in April 2021.

I do accept these are unpopular measure, but the Council must strive to be financially secure. A more positive approach by the Government would be a significant boost.

Control of Costs

It is important that every Council controls its costs. This Councils task is to ensure each service is providing good value for money.

The council has come under severe pressure regarding our finances. We have incurred significant pressure on our income and our expenditure has risen to meet the COVID-19 challenge. Once again may I thank the officers for rising to the challenge whilst working hard to minimise additional expenditure.

Service Delivery

As part of this process a review of the waste and recycling service will be carried out. Once this is complete the Council will decide on the long-term operation of the service. The review will consider all aspects of the service. This is likely to take a few months and any change will reflect our financial situation at the time.

Staff Resources

The Chief Executive, as head of Paid Service is required to keep under review the resources required for the discharge of functions and the organisation of Officers.

This is a continuous process, and the current focus is on the need to increase capacity to deliver services. The management structure and deployment of officers will be reported to Council.

We will look to find collaborative shared services, but the opportunities appear to be around resilience and not cost. Our officers are a valuable asset and their views on cost saving and efficiency will always be sort. As business cases are developed, they will be reported to Council.

Customer Service Centre

The physical Customer Service Centre has been closed since March 2020 due to the COVID pandemic. Since that time, the CSC technical officers have all worked remotely providing a 'business as usual' service without detriment to residents. On this basis the lease on the Bell Street premise which runs out in June 2021 will not be renewed.

This will realise a saving on the annual lease and ancillaries. However, we will continue to improve our Customer Service offering in the virtual environment by leveraging technology and will continue to focus on channel shift and working with our partners. The offering will also be considered alongside our plans for relocating the council offices.

Customer Service Excellence Award

It is especially important we will continue to build on the recent success of being awarded Customer Service Excellence Award. We will continue with the work involved

through this award as it drives forward reviewing our processes and systems to demonstrate continuous improvement on delivery of our services.

One of the successes of the Coronavirus Emergency has been our Community Hub. As a result, we have recently been awarded £88,000 to continue to provide further support to our residents.

It is important to support the continued involvement of the Hub to provide resilience around many of our services which we provide to our residents. It should be remembered that much of the hub's work is with the most deprived and vulnerable residents of the Borough.

This shows our continuing commitment to giving our residents the service they deserve.

Future Sustainability Initiatives

I will now identify some of the medium- and long-term actions the Council will take to ensure its sustainability.

Assets to Generate Income

The assets register has been published on our website for several years. The register will be presented on an annual basis to a Committee. This will ensure members can understand and comment.

The Council will bring forward plans to use our assets for the good of our residents. It must be understood we do not

possess boundless assets, but we do need to focus on getting the best we can from them.

Growth and Development

Over £10 million will be invested in the Borough by this Council. This will bring both jobs and housing.

This will be for the good of residents and businesses. For the Council it will bring in both capital receipts and income generation.

We will bring forward the development of the old Oadby Pool site to include community provision, it is intended to start construction by 31st March 2022.

We will bring forward the Housing Sites on Horsewell Lane and in South Wigston. These sites will be ready for construction by 31st March 2022.

We will redevelop land in South Wigston to include a new Community Health Centre. This will be in partnership with the CCG with at least planning permission by 31st March 2022.

We will bring forward the depot as a replacement for Bushloe House, this will be by 31st March 2022. As part of this process, we will check if moving to Brocks Hill and leasing the depot makes more financial sense. However, this would need to take into account the limitations of the Local Plan given it is designated green wedge land.

We will bring forward plans for the redevelopment of Bushloe House by 31st March 2022.

We will use Council owned land in Oadby and Wigston Town Centres to contribute towards the Local Plan. Provision of new housing in the town centres will be a priority. In the immediate term we will focus on bringing forward housing development on Paddock Street in Wigston with future consideration to be given to Sandhurst Street and/or East Street in Oadby.

Other opportunities for looking at the opportunities/viability for commercialisation of our assets in the future include our housing stock (realistically this would not be possible before 23/24); cemetery provision; allotment sites; community/pavilion sites.

Private / Public Sector Opportunities

As well as the efforts being made by this Council there are also developments coming to fruition provided by the private sector. A new prison is now under construction in Glen Parva, this could have a positive impact on job opportunities.

There are houses being built at several locations in the Borough these will bring new residents in as well as additional revenue to the Council and even more with the direction for growth.

An experienced and successful enterprise is actively pursuing the provision of small business units in part of the Borough, again this will bring in jobs and revenue.

Our officers are also working on other employment opportunities within the Borough which hopefully will become public knowledge in the foreseeable future.

Overview

We need to achieve a sustainable revenue account as quickly as possible so can start saving. We will look to invest these savings in such a way as to give a return to be used for revenue purposes. We will continue to invest in the Borough to improve facilities for the good of residents.

It is important to acknowledge that by making difficult decisions now, we can provide long term and sustainable services for our residents in the future.

Thank you.

Councillor John W Boyce

Leader of the Council

Dated: Thursday, 18 February 2021