

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL HELD AT CIVIC SUITE, BROCKS HILL COUNCIL OFFICES, WASHBROOK LANE, OADBY, LEICESTER, LE2 5JJ ON TUESDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2024 COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT

C D Kozlowski Mayor
J K Chohan Deputy Mayor



Meeting ID: 2714

COUNCILLORS

R H Adams
N Alam Deputy Leader of the Opposition
S S Athwal
L A Bentley Deputy Leader of the Council
G A Boulter
L M Broadley
F S Broadley
M H Charlesworth
H E Darling
M L Darr
J K Ford
D A Gamble
F S Ghattoraya
C S Gore Leader of the Opposition
S Z Haq Leader of the Council
J Kaufman
K J Loydall
C J R Martin
C A M Walter

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

A E Court Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service
D M Gill Head of Law & Democracy / Monitoring Officer
S Wheeliker Senior Democratic & Electoral Services Officer

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

P Joshi Attending remotely
R V Joshi Attending remotely

25. CALLING TO ORDER OF THE MEETING

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

26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillors G G Hunt and I K Ridley.

Councillors P Joshi and R V Joshi attended the meeting remotely, but in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Local Government Act 1972, were not considered present for the purposes of voting.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Members declared a pecuniary interest with regard to item 6a of the agenda, insofar as they, their partners and/or other members of their household are currently or were previously in receipt of Winter Fuel Payments.

R H Adams
S S Athwal
G A Boulter
L M Broadley
F S Broadley
M H Charlesworth
J K Chohan
M L Darr
F S Ghattoraya
C S Gore
J Kaufman
K J Loydall
C J R Martin
C A M Walter

In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Localism Act 2011, the Monitoring Officer granted an exemption to those named above in order to allow them to participate in the debate and vote thereon.

28. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 July 2024 be taken as read, confirmed and approved.

29. ACTION LIST ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

There was no Action List arising from the previous meeting.

30. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

30a. WINTER FUEL PAYMENTS

The Council gave consideration to the Motion on Notice (as set out at page 8 of the agenda reports pack) regarding the UK Government's decision to require means-testing to qualify for Winter Fuel Payments.

It was moved by the Leader of the Council, seconded by Councillor G A Boulter and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

- (i) The Chief Executive be instructed to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the policy on linking Winter Fuel Payments to Pension Credit receipt to be immediately paused and introduce a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments; and**

- (ii) **A significant awareness campaign to maximise uptake of pension credits be urgently commenced.**

Postscript

A copy of the letter sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer is attached to this minute.

31. PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

None.

32. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor thanked Members for attending her Charity Night on 9 September 2024, noting it raised over £800.00 for her chosen charities, and reminded Members the next Mayoral Charity Night will be on 3 February 2025.

32a. OFFICIAL MAYORAL / DEPUTY MAYORAL ENGAGEMENTS

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The list of Official Engagements attended by The Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor be noted.

33. LEADER'S STATEMENT

The Leader of the Council presented a statement outlining her recent work and meetings she has attended, the administration's plans and an overview of recent decisions taken since the previous meeting of the Council, together with fielding questions in relation to her statement.

The Leader spoke about her fading hope in the new UK Government due to further cuts in services, the change in winter fuel allowance eligibility and retaining the 2-child benefit cap, as well as the need to continue with the Council's Sustainability Plan to achieve a balanced budget and avoid issuing a Section 114 notice.

The Leader also spoke about the need to ensure the transition to fortnightly refuse collections be as smooth as possible for residents and assured residents that the privately-owned green spaces that were up for sale by developers would remain as public open spaces in being designated as such in planning terms.

34. APPROVAL OF THE COUNCIL'S LGBCE 'COUNCIL SIZE' SUBMISSION (OCTOBER 2024)

The Council gave consideration to the report and appendix (as set out at pages 11 – 29 of the agenda reports pack), which provided Members with the opportunity to comment on and approve for submission a report to the Local Government Boundary Commission of England (LGBCE) setting out what number of Councillors the Council itself considered appropriate as part of the ongoing LGBCE review.

Councillor M H Charlesworth proposed an amendment to the report (a copy of which is attached to this minute) recommending a reduction in Councillor numbers to achieve

parity with other Councils in terms of number of electors per Councillor. The amendment was not seconded and therefore it was not voted upon.

Councillor F S Ghattoraya left the Civic Suite at 7:39 pm and re-entered at 7:46 pm.

Councillor M L Darr left the Civic Suite at 7.55 pm and did not return.

It was moved by Councillor G A Boulter, seconded by Councillor C S Gore and

RESOLVED THAT:

Members approved the report for submission, subject to final amendments made following consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Opposition, the Head of Paid Service / Chief Executive and the Head of Law & Democracy / Monitoring Officer.

For	19
Against	1
Abstentions	0

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.17 pm



The Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
His Majesty's Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

Please ask for: Anne Court
Direct Line: 0116 257 2602
Email: Anne.Court1@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

02 October 2024

Via email to: rachel.reeves.mp@parliament.uk

Dear Chancellor

Re: Winter Fuel Payments – Council Motion

At this Council's meeting on 24 September 2024, Members resolved:-

- That I write to you calling for the policy on linking winter fuel payments to pension credit to be immediately paused and introduce a new threshold to determine eligibility for winter fuel payments; and
- Urgently commence a significant awareness campaign to maximise uptake of pension credits.

The full motion is attached which sets out Members' concerns.

Yours sincerely

Anne Court
Chief Executive

enc

Minute Item 34

Amendment to LGBCE 'Council Size' submission

Delete the last 4 paragraphs on pages 28 & 29

That the following be added to Oadby & Wigston Council submission to the LGBCE.

In the absence of any benchmarking concerning electoral numbers and the correlation to councillor numbers, it has become apparent through analysis that OWBC is out-of-step with other Leicestershire authorities and councils further afield, as is illustrated below;

Authority	Electorate	Cllrs	Ratio
O&W	44,278	26	1,703
Blaby	77,622	36	2,156
Harborough	72,829	34	2,142
Charnwood	131,826	52	2,535
NWL	81,167	38	2,136
H&B	87,897	34	2,585
Gedling	89,505	41	2,183
Broxbourne	71,684	30	2,389
Adur	48,225	29	1,662
Ashfield	92,816	35	2,652
Dartford	83,159	42	1,980
Fareham	89,031	32	2,543
Rugby	82,098	42	1,954

The districts other than Leicestershire were randomly chosen and a full list of all districts and regions is available.

Adur is the only comparable authority to O&W, but they have a cabinet system with a separate scrutiny function, which justifies the ratio of electorate to Cllr.

Because O&W has no stand-alone scrutiny function, it does not need, nor can it justify the high numbers of Cllrs.

The proposal is to reduce the number of Cllrs to 22, this will give a ratio of 1,964 electors to each Cllr. This will solve the issue of South Wigston, which can remain a 3-member ward. The argument about social deprivation and health inequalities doesn't stand up, South Wigston has managed perfectly well with 3 Cllrs for 2 decades. The areas of Oadby & Wigston will have their boundaries altered in due course and Oadby will have 9 and Wigston 10 Cllrs respectively.

Whilst not a consideration for the LGBCE, the proposal will save at least £20,000 and probably more in these very difficult financial circumstances.

Cllr Michael Charlesworth