

COUNCIL**Wednesday, 13th December, 2023**

Present:-

Councillor Brady (Chair)

Councillors	Bagley	Councillors	Kellman
	B Bingham		McLaren
	Blakemore		Miles
	Brittain		Niblock
	Brock		Ogle
	Callan		Perkins
	Caulfield		Redihough
	Culley		Ridgway
	Davenport		Sarvent
	Davies		Serjeant
	Dyke		Snowdon
	Falconer		Staton
	Flood		Stone
	Gilby		Thompson
	Hollingworth		Thornton
	Holmes		Twigg
	J Innes		Wheeldon
	P Innes		Yates
	Jacobs		

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

45 TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 18 OCTOBER, 2023**RESOLVED –**

That the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 18 October, 2023 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chair.

46 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor referred with sadness to the recent deaths of former Councillor, Alderwoman June Beckingham and longstanding staff member Tony Devereux. Members observed a minute's silence in their honour.

The Mayor informed Council of the following events which he and the Mayoress had attended:

- Commemorative events over the remembrance period including services at Chesterfield Parish Church, Eastwood Park and Christ Church and the 11th Hour Act of Remembrance at the Town Hall;
- Hosting pupils from Spire Infant School, Brockwell Infant School and St Mary's Primary School at the Town Hall for Local Democracy events;
- Derbyshire's Coronation Tree Planting Ceremony on the date of His Majesty's birthday; and
- Chesterfield's Christmas Lights Switch On, alongside the stars of this year's pantomime and Paddington Bear.

The Mayor invited members to join him and the Mayoress in committee rooms 1 and 2 for a festive drink and mince pie after the conclusion of the council meeting and wished everyone a happy and healthy Christmas and New Year.

47 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Baldauf-Good and J Bingham.

48 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS' INTERESTS RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

No declarations were received.

49 PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO THE COUNCIL

Under Standing Order No. 12, the following question was asked by Max Kerley, in relation to Rufford Close:

At the Council meeting on 18 October Cllr Gilby in response to a question from Cllr Falconer informed the Council that the matter had been settled by arbitration and that the final adjudication had been received in May

2022. My question is which parties were involved in this arbitration and what financial settlements formed part of the adjudication?

Councillor Tricia Gilby provided a verbal response as follows:

- Legal proceedings had not been completed, nor had the matter been settled by arbitration.
- A written reply had been sent to Cllr Falconer and all members of Council in response to the question that Cllr Falconer had asked at October's council meeting.
- The dispute between the Council and one of the contractors had been referred to adjudication and the decision received in May 2022.
- The adjudication decision hadn't addressed all elements of the dispute to the Council's satisfaction and therefore the Council was contemplating bringing further legal proceedings through arbitration or the courts.
- The adjudication decision, other documents relating to it and the parties involved were all legally privileged and therefore could not be disclosed.

The following supplementary question was asked by Max Kerley;

Is the Leader's reluctance to answer the first question, in the hope that the Council can get more monies in legal proceedings or is it an attempt to protect and shield Derbyshire Building Control Partnership and the Chief Executive of Chesterfield Borough Council?

Councillor Tricia Gilby provided a verbal response stating that she wasn't able to disclose any further information than that shared in response to Mr Kerley's original question.

PETITIONS TO COUNCIL

In accordance with Standing Order No.13, Council debated the following petition from Support Keeping Chesterfield Visitor Information Centre Open, which was received on 24 November, 2023.

The petition said “We support keeping Chesterfield Visitor Centre open. We oppose the proposed closure of the Visitor Information Centre which is a valued resource for local people and visitors to the area.”

The petition contained in excess of 1,000 signatures; therefore, it was referred to Council to be debated in accordance with the Council’s petition scheme and Standing Order No.13.

Carole Garmory, a representative of the petition organisers for Support Keeping Chesterfield Visitor Information Centre Open presented the petition and answered member’s questions.

RESOLVED –

1. That the ‘Support Keeping Chesterfield Visitor Information Centre Open’ petitioners be thanked for submitting the petition to Chesterfield Borough Council.
2. That Chesterfield Borough Council notes the petition and the matters raised in the petition debate by both the petition organiser and members of Council.
3. That Council officers ensure that appropriate reference is made to the petition and matters raised in the petition debate within any final report prepared for the Council’s Cabinet on the future of the Chesterfield Visitor Information Centre.
4. That the Council’s Cabinet, as the decision-making body with responsibility for such matters, take note of the petition and the matters raised in the petition debate when making any final decision on the future of the Chesterfield Visitor Information Centre.

51 QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER

Under Standing Order No. 14 Members asked the following questions:

Councillor Niblock asked if the Leader could estimate the drop in the numbers of visitors to Chesterfield that would result if the Council withdrew its annual funding of 15K towards the running costs of Visit Peak District and Derbyshire?

The Leader advised that in July 2023, the Council had adopted a Budget Strategy and in November 2023 Cabinet had agreed a Budget Strategy Implementation Plan. There were plans to review many areas of Council expenditure, and that in due course reports would be prepared for Cabinet consideration and approval. The Leader stated that she did not have an estimate.

Councillor Flood asked the Leader if she could share with the Council information on all the support given and services provided to residents and businesses affected by the recent floods?

The Leader thanked Councillor Flood for her recognition of all the hard work Council staff had put in to helping the flood victims. Over 800 homes and businesses had been affected by Storm Babet.

In the immediate response phase, Environmental Services staff had responded to calls from residents for sandbags and aqua sacks, Homelessness staff had sourced temporary accommodation, and staff at Queen's Park Sports Centre had worked in support of Derbyshire County Council to open an emergency rest centre.

From the next day onwards, all Council services were engaged, assessing the impact on residents and businesses and leading the clean-up operations.

218 households were now in receipt of community recovery grants and 98 businesses had applied for business recovery grants.

The Leader also expressed her thanks to Gussie's Kitchen and the Lifehouse Church who had both offered hot meals and support to those helping out or affected by the floods.

Councillor Hollingworth asked the Leader if she could clarify what was meant by 'Review and Reduce the costs of Town Centre Events'

The Leader referred Cllr Hollingworth to the Budget Strategy Implementation Plan where further detail could be found on the scope of the Review.

Councillor Dyke asked the Leader for an update on the 22 council homes that were being built at Middlecroft / Staveley.

The Leader was pleased to advise that the Council had overseen the development of 100 plus new council homes over the past four years. The 22 new homes planned for Middlecroft / Staveley were a mixture of bungalows and houses, 2 bed and 3 bed. Adaptations were also being made to one of the new homes to accommodate the needs of the tenant who would be moving in. All 22 would be green homes, heated by air source heat pumps, with solar panels fitted as standard alongside electric charging points to help the Council deliver on its climate change commitments.

Councillor Snowdon asked the Leader to clarify what was meant by 'Reviewing residents free town centre parking', does it mean reducing the hours or ending free parking altogether? Should we extend this and remove free car parking passes from Councillors too?

The Leader stated that the Monitoring Officer might be better placed to answer his question. As councillors could legitimately claim expenses when carrying out their duties, it would in all likelihood cost the Council more to reimburse councillors for the cost of parking their cars rather than meeting the cost of providing free parking passes.

Councillor Ogle asked the Leader for an update on how the Staveley Town Deal Construction Skills Hub project.

The Leader was delighted to inform Council that she had recently visited the construction skills hub site at Mastin Moor with the first intake of students recruited by Chesterfield College. The students would be able to gain experience and hone their practical skills in a live setting alongside their time in a College classroom, learning to build new homes and about new modern methods of construction. Given its location, it was also hoped that the Hub would encourage the young people of Staveley to 'Start, Stay and Grow' in the area.

Councillor Jacobs asked the Leader what support would be offered to people who have no access to internet banking or cannot use a cashless system?

The Leader informed Council that there were numerous alternative locations to the Customer Service Centre where residents could pay their bills. Many of these locations were more convenient than making the journey to the Town Hall. Residents could also contact the Customer Service Centre by phone to make payments.

52 EAST MIDLANDS INVESTMENT ZONE

Pursuant to Cabinet Minute No. 46 (2023/2024) the Service Director – Economic Growth submitted a report seeking approval for two development sites within the borough of Chesterfield to be part of an East Midlands submission to Government for Investment Zone (IZ) status and for the Chesterfield sites to be designated as Business Rates Retention areas.

RESOLVED –

1. That the submission of an East Midlands Investment Zone proposal to Government, to include two development sites (as identified by the plan in Appendix A) within the borough of Chesterfield be supported.
2. That it be agreed in principle for the 2no. development sites to be designated as Business Rates Retention areas in line with Government policy, subject to:
 - a) The formal establishment of the East Midlands Mayoral Combined County Authority (EMMCCA) in May 2024
 - b) The Council being satisfied with the final terms of the Business Rates Retention Policy applicable to the East Midlands Investment Zone
 - c) The Council being satisfied with the final terms of the Reinvestment Strategy developed by EMMCCA to guide the reinvestment of the retained Business Rates within the East Midlands area
 - d) The Council being satisfied with the governance arrangements for the East Midlands Investment Zone, when finalised, and the Council's role within them.
3. That, given the need for the Council to be able to advise EMMCCA and Government in a timely manner of its position ahead of the final Gateway submissions, authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Service Director for Finance and the Leader of the Council to consider the final proposals and

arrangements for the East Midlands Investment Zone and conclude the terms of the Council's involvement.

4. That an update report be submitted to Cabinet on the East Midlands Investment Zone as and when the outcome of EMMCCA's submission to Government is known.
5. That the Council reserves its right to review its position in relation to the two development sites being designated as Business Rates Retention areas should there be a change in Government policy and / or a change in the Council's relationship with EMMCCA.

53 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL REVIEW OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES

Pursuant to Cabinet Minute No. 48 (2023/2024) the Head of Regulatory Law & Monitoring Officer submitted a report for Council to consider the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IR Panel) following its recent review of the Members' Allowances Scheme.

Councillor Holmes proposed an amendment to the recommendations relating to the IRP report on the members' allowances scheme as follows:

1. That the recommended increases in the Basic Allowance and in the Special Responsibility Allowances be frozen between now and the end of the 2024/25 financial year, in view of the unprecedented and deep £4million of cuts, savings and fee increases that are being implemented.
2. The issue should be reconsidered for 2025/26 in the context of whatever measures are being proposed to deal with the predicted deficit for that financial year.

The amendment was voted on by members and was not approved.

RESOLVED –

1. That Full Council approves the report and recommendations of the IR Panel for implementation from 1 April 2024.
2. That the IR Panel's report be published in the press and on the Council's website.

3. That a supplementary estimate to meet the additional costs outlined in paragraph 6.4 be approved for the financial year 2024/25.
4. That Full Council expresses both its appreciation and thanks to the members of the IR Panel for the thorough and efficient way in which they carried out the review.
5. That the basic allowance, special responsibility allowances, subsistence allowance and Mayoral Allowance are updated annually in line with the annual percentage pay increase given to Chesterfield Borough Council employees (or by a percentage equivalent to that of the mean/median pay increase, in the event of a flat rate increase) as agreed for each financial year by the National Joint Council for Local Government Staff until 31 March, 2027 unless the Council has before then sought a further recommendation from its IR Panel on their application in this scheme.

54 **MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the following Committees be noted:

- Appeals and Regulatory Committee of 4 and 11 October, 1, 8 and 29 November, 2023.
- Employment and General Committee of 20 November, 2023.
- Licensing Committee of 13 November, 2023.
- Planning Committee of 2 and 23 October and 13 November, 2023.
- Standards and Audit Committee of 11 October, 2023.

55 **TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF CABINET OF 17 OCTOBER AND 14 NOVEMBER, 2023**

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meetings of Cabinet of 17 October and 14 November, 2023 be noted.

56 QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 19

There were no questions.