

MINUTES of the MEETING of the
SOUTH DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
held via Microsoft Teams
on Wednesday, 24th February 2021
at 6.00pm

PRESENT:

Labour Group

Councillors Bambrick, Dunn, Gee, Mrs. Heath, Mulgrew, Dr. Pearson, Pegg, Rhind, Richards, Shepherd, Singh, Southerd, Mrs. Stuart, Taylor and Tilley.

Conservative Group

Councillor Muller (Chairman), Councillor Atkin (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Mrs. Bridgen, Mrs. Brown, Churchill, Corbin, Ford, Mrs. Haines, Hewlett and Watson.

Independent Group

Councillors Angliss, Dawson, Fitzpatrick, MacPherson and Roberts.

Non-Grouped

Councillor Mrs. Wheelton.

CL/84 **APOLOGIES**

Council was informed that apologies had been received from Councillor Mrs. Patten and Councillor Dr. Perry.

CL/85 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

On behalf of all Members, the Chairman declared a pecuniary interest in relation to Item CL/97, Council Tax Setting 2021/22, in accordance with Clause 14(4)(vi) of the Members' Code of Conduct.

CL/86 **APPOINT THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The Council appointed Councillor Trevor Southerd as the Deputy Leader of the Council for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

The Council appointed Councillor Mrs Lisa Brown as Deputy Leader of the Opposition Group for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

CL/87 **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman informed Council of the sad loss of Councillor Mrs Patten's husband and requested that on behalf of Members and all the staff at South Derbyshire District Council condolences would be sent to Councillor Mrs Patten and her family at a very sad time.

CL/88 **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader reiterated the Chairman's wish for a letter of condolence to be sent to Councillor Mrs Patten following the family bereavement.

The Leader conveyed thanks to all staff involved in the response to Storm Christopher earlier in the year and to the CVS for their contributions in the community. The Leader informed Members he had attended Area Forum meetings and congratulated the Chairs and Officers in managing these meetings in a virtual setting. The Leader had also visited Covid-19 test centres manned by the NHS, volunteers and the Armed Forces. The Leader noted the sad news of the death of Captain Sir Tom Moore.

On behalf of the Conservative Group, Councillor Churchill welcomed the proposal to send a letter of condolence to Councillor Mrs Patten and family.

On behalf of the Independent Group, Councillor Fitzpatrick offered condolences to Councillor Mrs Patten and her family on the sad loss of her husband.

CL/89 **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

The Chief Executive announced the resignation of Councillor Dr Jane Perry with immediate effect which would necessitate a by-election. The Chief Executive would arrange a letter of condolence to be sent to Councillor Mrs Patten on behalf of all Members.

The Chief Executive advised Members that Wards, the sub-contractor for waste recycling, had gone into liquidation and thanked Council staff for their quick action in covering the activities of the sub-contractor and ensuring all services continued.

The Chief Executive announced that a letter had been signed by all Chief Executives across the country requesting the government to consider a continuation of virtual meetings with effect from 6th May. The response was an active consideration.

The Chief Executive announced that Elections would take place on Thursday, 6th May and that he had delegated responsibility of Returning Officer to the Council's Head of Legal and Democratic Services who had served as Deputy Returning Officer with full powers in past elections.

CL/90 **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10**

Council was informed that no questions had been received.

CL/91 **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 11**

Council was informed that no questions had been received.

CL/92 **ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2020**

The External Auditor presented the report to Members setting out the findings of the Audit with special reference to the restrictions that the Covid 19 pandemic had imposed whilst conducting the Audit. The External Auditor wished to pass thanks to the Strategic Director (Corporate Services) and the team for working with the Auditors to make the Audit a success.

RESOLVED:

Council considered and approved the Annual Audit Letter for 2019/20.

CL/93 **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2021-2025**

The Head of Organisational Development and Performance introduced the new strategy to Members highlighting the numerous sources of data gathered by the internal working group that informed the key priorities in the report. The Head of Organisational Development and Performance thanked residents and all those that had provided feedback. Officers that had worked on the programme were also thanked for their exceptional efforts.

Members noted an excellent report and raised questions regarding the availability of information to residents without internet access; details of supporting groups for those who needed help with access to the housing register or universal credit and how young people can be engaged. Members were informed that several forums and groups were operating locally and nationally to provide support to residents with internet access. The Strategic Director (Service Delivery) advised Members that a Tenant Engagement Strategy which included internet access had been put out to consultation and the results would be reported to the Housing and Community Services Committee in the near future.

The Chief Executive informed Members that the Council was driving forward with the engagement of young people via a Youth Parliament and that local Primary School children would be invited to the Chamber.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 Council approved the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan for 2021-2025 as detailed in Appendix A of the report.***
- 1.2 Council endorsed Member Champions supporting and monitoring performance against the approved Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Action plan.***
- 1.3 Council agreed that an annual report be presented to Full Council on the progress and outcomes that would be achieved and any changes or developments to the approved action plan.***

- 1.4 Council acknowledged the support provided by voluntary, community and faith-based groups, partners who worked with the Council in delivering services and individuals whose responses and support during the extensive period of consultation had enabled the completion of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan for 2021-2025.**

CL/94 **COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME REGULATIONS 2021**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the report informing Members that the scheme had been recommended by the Finance and Management Committee with no changes proposed to the existing scheme for the next financial year.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 Council agreed that, Under Section 10 of the Local Government Finance Act 2012, a Local Council Tax Support Scheme for South Derbyshire be adopted for the financial year commencing 1 April 2021.**
- 1.2 Council agreed that regulations be approved and cited as the Council Tax Reduction Scheme Regulations (South Derbyshire District Council Local Scheme 2021) and come into force on 25 February 2021.**
- 1.3 Council agreed that these regulations amend the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, as amended, set out in the Schedule to those Regulations for the purposes of paragraph 4 of Schedule 1A to the Local Government Finance Act 1992, by:**
- Continuing the insertion of Section 18a Class G: exempt persons who are not pensioners.**
 - Continuing the insertion of Section 18b Class H: persons who are not pensioners.**
 - Continuing the amendment to Regulation 32 to vary the maximum entitlement in prescribed cases, i.e. to give effect to the designation of war pensioners and the disabled as protected groups (in addition to pensioners under the Prescribed Requirements) and to reduce benefit entitlement in non-protected groups by 8.5% for persons on passported benefit and by 10% in all other cases.**
 - Continuing the amendment to Schedule 8 (20) to ensure the disregard of war pensions, to include other payments made under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.**

- ***Continuing the insertion at Part 12 Chapter 6 the provision to increase the period of extended payments (as defined in the Regulations) from 4 to 8 weeks.***

1.4 Council agreed that the amounts of pensions, tax credits, income related and non-income related welfare benefits and allowances, component parts, applicable amounts, premiums, and deductions be uprated in accordance with the 2013 Regulations in 1.3 above as set out in Housing Benefit Circular HB A01/2021

CL/95 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2021-22**

The Head of Finance presented the report to the Members highlighting the key points.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 Council approved the Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22.***
- 1.2 Council approved the Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2021/22 to 2025/26.***
- 1.3 Council approved the Investment Policy for 2021/22 including the associated counterparty (lending) list.***

CL/96 **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECTION 151 OFFICER**

The Chief Finance Officer presented the report to the Members highlighting key points about the Council's budget situation. The Chief Finance Officer informed Council that the Housing and Community Committee would continue to review the Housing Revenue Account which was in a sustainable position. Members were advised that there were no issues with Treasury Management but there could be future pressures on Capital Management. The Chief Finance Officer added that the General Fund was reported as positive however the Fair Funding Review to be announced later in the year could affect the Council's income.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 Council considered and noted the Annual Report of the Section 151 Officer.***
- 1.2 Council agreed that it would pay due regard to the Annual Report when approving the Budget for 2021/22 and when considering future proposals for new spending and the utilisation of resources.***
- 1.3 Council agreed that no new spending commitments were to be added to the Base Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan approved by the Finance and Management Committee on 11 February 2021, pending the outcome of the Government's Fair Funding Review.***

1.4 The Council agreed that the Medium-Term Financial Plan be reviewed and updated following details emerging from the Government's Fair Funding Review expected in autumn 2021.

CL/97 **COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2021-22**

The Leader addressed Members and referred to the Finance and Management Committee held on 11th February 2021 which had reviewed several options for increasing Council Tax and its recommendation was for an increase of 1%. The Leader highlighted the Council's healthy financial position and acknowledged the difficult times for both residents and businesses due to the pandemic. The Leader The proposed increase of a 1% increase in Council Tax ensures that no cuts will be made to services in 2021-22. The Leader commended the Chief Executive and his staff for providing the services throughout the year.

Councillors Dr Pearson, Pegg and Southerd supported the Leader and the recommendation.

Councillor Fitzpatrick proposed an amendment of a Council Tax Setting change from 1% to a 1.5% increase to provide support to the most disadvantaged in the community, to protect services and to make a good financial decision.

The Monitoring Officer informed Members that any amendments to the resolutions would require an amended report to be ratified by Full Council.

RESOLVED:

Council rejected the formal Council Tax resolutions for 2021/22 as per Appendix 1 of the report and agreed that a report should be brought back to Council to consider an increase of 1.5%.

As required by the Council's Procedure Rules a recorded vote was taken:

The Members who voted in favour of the resolution above were:

Councillors Atkin, Angliss, Mrs Bridgen, Mrs Brown, Churchill, Corbin, Dawson, Fitzpatrick, Ford, Mrs Haines, Hewlett, MacPherson, Muller, Roberts, Watson and Mrs Wheelton

The Members who voted against the above resolution were:

Councillors Bambrick, Dunn, Gee, Heath, Mulgrew, Dr Pearson, Pegg, Rhind, Richards, Shepherd, Singh, Southerd, Mrs Stuart, Taylor, and Tilley

CL/98 **TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE OPEN MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING AREA FORUMS**

Committee / Area Forum	Date
Linton Area Forum	21 st January 2020
Newhall Area Forum	22 nd January 2020
Etwall Area Forum	28 th January 2020

Swadlincote Area Forum	29 th January 2020
Melbourne Area Forum	6 th February 2020
Repton Area Forum	11 th February 2020

RESOLVED:

That the above Area Forum open minutes were received and approved as a true record.

CL/99 **TO REVIEW THE COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES, AND WORKING PANELS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

Members reviewed the composition of Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Panels for the remainder of the municipal year.

RESOLVED:

Council approved the following changes to its Committees:

Finance and Management Committee

Councillor Tilley to be replaced by Councillor Pegg. Councillor Pegg to replace Councillor Richards as Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

Housing and Community Services

Councillor Pegg to be replaced by Councillor Tilley.

Planning Committee

Councillor Shepherd to replace Councillor Southerd as Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

Environmental and Development Services Committee

Councillor Heath to replace Councillor Dunn as Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

Audit Sub-Committee

Councillor Hewlett to replace Councillor Mrs. Patten.

CL/100 **TO REVIEW THE COMPOSITION OF SUBSTITUTE PANELS**

Members reviewed the composition of Substitute Panels for the remainder of the municipal year.

RESOLVED:

Council approved the following changes to its Sub-Committees:

Finance and Management Committee

Councillor Tilley to replace Councillor Pegg.

Housing and Community Services

Councillor Pegg to replace Councillor Tilley.

CL/101 **TO REVIEW REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

Members reviewed the representation on Outside Bodies.

RESOLVED:

Council approved changes to its representation on Outside Bodies:

Citizens Advice South Derbyshire and City (CASDAC)

Councillor Shepherd to replace Councillor Rhind.

Sharpe's Pottery Heritage & Arts Trust Ltd

Councillor Taylor to become the representative.

CL/102 **TO REVIEW OF REPRESENTATION OF MEMBER CHAMPIONS**

Members reviewed the Representation of Member Champions.

RESOLVED:

Council approved the following amendments to Member Champions.

Design (Planning)

Councillor Tilley

Environment, Waste & Recycling

Councillor Taylor

Equality & Diversity

Councillor Singh

Health & Wellbeing

Councillor Bambrick

Historic Environment

Councillor Southerd

Performance & Data Quality

Councillor Dr. Pearson

Risk Management

Councillor Taylor

Safeguarding

Councillor Pegg

Voluntary Sector

Councillor Rhind

CL/103 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)**

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as indicated in the reports of Committees.

EXEMPT QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NUMBER 11

Council was informed that no questions had been received.

The meeting terminated at 20:25 hours.

COUNCILLOR D MULLER
CHAIRMAN OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL