

COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2024

Present: Councillor S Paterson , Mayor

Councillors: D Bagshaw
P J Bales
L A Ball BEM
R E Bofinger
M Brown
R Bullock
G Bunn
B C Carr
C Carr
S J Carr
A Cooper
H L Crosby
T A Cullen
S Dannheimer
H J Faccio
K A Harlow
G S Hills
S P Jeremiah
A Kingdon
H Land
D L MacRae
T J Marsh
G Marshall
J W McGrath
W Mee
J M Owen
P J Owen
D D Pringle
M Radulovic MBE
H E Skinner
P A Smith
V C Smith
A W G A Stockwell
C M Tideswell
S Webb
E Williamson
E Winfield
K Woodhead

56 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S A Bagshaw, S Kerry, H G Khaled, R D MacRae and D K Watts.

57 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor E Williamson declared an other-registerable interest in item 9.2 due to being a Member of Greasley Parish Council, minute number 64.2 refers. A number of Councillors stated they had received a dispensation for the same item.

58 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2024 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

59 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor gave a brief résumé of her engagements since the previous Council meeting.

60 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader stated that the end of a year was a good time to take stock on how the Council was progressing in delivering its Corporate Plan objectives.

It was stated that in each of the last two years the Council had added more homes to the Council's housing stock than had been lost through right to buy. This year that trend was set to continue and there was a solid pipeline of proposals for new homes that will take the Council into the new year.

A new Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy was adopted in the last cabinet cycle and the Council was on track to fully spend the UKSPF allocation and had produced a leaflet detailing some of the achievements in utilising those funds including, supporting the retention of Raleigh, an iconic brand in Broxtowe, and partnering with the CAB in Broxtowe to support financial resilience which has resulted in £3.1m of additional income being claimed by over 1,200 individuals to which they were entitled in financial support.

In 2023/24 the Council's carbon footprint was being calculated at 2,343tCO₂e, a 37% reduction since the 2018/19 re-baseline. Having now scoped the scope 3 emissions with the target to become carbon neutral by 2027, which the Council was on track to achieve, progression to achieve net zero would be through implementing the continuously evolving and ambitious action plan.

The Council retained its White Ribbon Award and there was excellent partnership working to address domestic violence issues in Broxtowe. This included the roll out of the Sanctuary Scheme, which continued to support people who wished to remain securely in their homes which is less disruptive for children, and for those in employment. There was much more work to do to continue to address continuing problems with violence and anti-social behaviour in Broxtowe. The Council is committed to working with all partners to address these problems.

The D.H. Lawrence Festival was highly successful, and the D.H. Lawrence writing competition attracted a considerable number of entrants from all over the Country. Over 100 events had been organised in Broxtowe which were varied and diverse and brought people together from all different backgrounds and ages.

Public toilets had been painted in line with the recommendations of the new Public Toilets Strategy. Following the creation of new public toilets at Beeston, new Changing Places toilets will be created as part of the Pencil works development in Stapleford.

There was much more to do to support people in the more deprived areas, and to address health inequality which is far too large a problem in the Borough. The government would be publishing a white paper on devolution before Christmas, and this would bring huge uncertainty to the Borough, the workforce and the community. The Leader stated that he was committed to ensuring that whatever may happen in the future he would continue to serve the residents as best he could.

61 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

61.1 THE FOLLOWING QUESTION WAS SUBMITTED BY MR. MONEESH PATEL MBCHB FRCOPHTH FOR THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL:

“In the light of the severity of the Japanese Knotweed (JKW) infestation on private land adjacent Sandy Lane, Bramcote, which is directly behind my house, I welcome on behalf of all local residents the intervention and recognition of this problem raised by the recent motion from the Broxtowe Independent Group.

This would address the significant public concern and recognise the ongoing ‘harm’ of JKW in order to protect biodiversity and promote enhancements of the Green Infrastructure Corridor. The recognition is noted and welcomed that JKW on the porous sandstone rock can only be eradicated by physical removal (by a specialist) thus avoiding contamination of the Aquifer below which supplies drinking water to Greater Nottingham.

Can we request that Broxtowe Borough Council adopts a corporate strategy to seek the removal of this infestation at the earliest possible opportunity, endorsed by all Councillors (apolitically) and has particular regard to background policy on this matter. BBC Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy (Jan 2018) and in particular sections 2 and 5 which recognises porous sandstone bedrock and the associated risks. Will departments work constructively and collaboratively with landowners to resolve this contaminated land issue and rid Broxtowe of this infestation for future generations?

Can the Leader of the Council also confirm that any Councillor who is a member of the Planning Committee or a substitute on the Planning Committee, who has expressed an opinion prior to considering an application on this site which may involve the removal of Japanese Knotweed, be barred from taking part in any debate at a future planning committee or voting on any such application? Thank you for your time and consideration of our concerns and my questions.”

In response to the question, the Leader stated that there were a number of invasive species that should be considered in addition to Japanese Knotweed. The Council did not have the resources or personnel to tackle the problem individually and the government should provide the necessary funding. The Leader would request that the

Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook a review of the problems and reported back with its findings.

61.2 THE FOLLOWING QUESTION WAS SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR RON JONES, VICE CHAIRMAN OF GREASLEY PARISH COUNCIL FOR THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL:

"Greasley Parish Council would like to thank the Governance, Audit and Standards Committee for their deliberations and recommendation to the full Broxtowe Borough Council not to proceed with Option 1 of the Community Governance Review. If pursued, this option would have seen Greasley Parish merged with our neighbouring Parish and Town Councils. We hope that, tonight, this Council will accept the recommendation, so enabling Greasley Parish Council to continue to provide our community with the best possible services, amenities and events. The overwhelming support from our residents to retain Greasley Parish Council demonstrates the value they place on the work we do and is a clear sign that we are getting things right.

We understand the need to address boundary issues and remain open to discussions on this matter, provided the best interests of our residents are at the heart of any changes. Please can the Leader ensure that they are comprehensively consulted at every stage so that their voices are heard properly from the outset?

We hope that a decision tonight will bring much-needed relief to our Councillors, staff, volunteers, and residents, allowing them to move forward and focus on the festive season without this uncertainty hanging over them. Thank you."

In response, the Leader stated that the Council had carried out a consultation and had responded accordingly. Boundary issues had to be resolved and during a future review consultation would take place to ensure that all views were taken into consideration.

62 PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' REPORTS

62.1 PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORT FOR RESOURCES AND PERSONNEL POLICY

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Personnel Policy presented his report. Responses to questions included that Broxtowe's Council Tax collection rates were in the top quartile and there were rigorous processes in place to collect from those that do not pay, the majority of which was due to irrecoverable arrears. The financial settlement would not be known until Christmas and progress was hoped for the fair funding review. It was stated that no Council services would be outsourced.

62.2 PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORT HOUSING

The Portfolio Holder presented her report and responses to questions included shared disappointment over call abandonment rates and a continuing aim to improve services. Right-to-buy should be abolished as it supports some tenants and disadvantages others. The Council was working hard with its partners to tackle homelessness, which was of extra concern at this time of year.

62.3 PORTFOLIO REPORT FOR LEISURE AND HEALTH

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health presented her report and response to questions included that the plans for Bramcote Leisure Centre were ongoing and provision of services was being considered for the whole of the south of the Borough. It was further stated that all decisions had a cost implication and there was a balance to be struck.

62.4 PORTFOLIO REPORT FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change presented her reports and responses to questions included that the Boundary Brook catchment area in Trowell would be part of a multi-agency approach to provide a natural flood management solution. Additionally, the Portfolio Holder stated that she would work with the Portfolio Holder for Housing who would be consulted as the Council worked on biodiversity net gain.

62.5 PORTFOLIO REPORT FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety presented her report and stated that if Members had concerns about anti-social behaviour in the Borough then these should be reported in order to target the problem areas.

62.6 PORTFOLIO REPORT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Asset Management presented his report and responses to questions included stating that resources and infrastructure were now required by local authorities as much as at any time previously. Additionally, the Council was looking at ways of communicating to improve transport routes which was in need of redress for the benefit of the public.

63 UPDATE ON SCRUTINY MATTERS

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee updated the Council as to the work of the Committee since the last Council meeting.

64 REFERENCES

64.1 INTERIM REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

At the Governance, Audit and Standards Committee on 23 September 2024 a report was noted regarding the proposed arrangements for a review of polling districts and polling places. The purpose of the review was specifically to consider changes to two polling places but comments from any interested party were also welcomed on all other existing polling districts and polling places. Following a public consultation during October 2024, just one representation was received and no representations were received regarding the current polling district boundaries

RESOLVED that the proposed changes to the designation of polling places set out in Appendix 2 of the report be approved.

Reason

Chapter 3 Part 1 of the Scheme of Delegation in the Constitution allows the Chief Executive to make necessary changes to polling stations at short notice before an election with any permanent changes being approved at full Council.

64.2 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

On 23 May 2024, full Council considered a recommendation on the Community Governance Review submitted by the Governance, Audit and Standards Committee following consideration of information supplied by a Member Task and Finished Group which had been formed to consider options for the Community Governance Review.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor P J Owen and seconded by Councillor E Williamson that this Council reimburse Greasley Parish Council for reasonable costs incurred during the consultation. On being put to the meeting, the proposed amendment was defeated.

RESOLVED that the following be approved:

- 1. Not to proceed with the recommendation (Option1) as per the Council meeting held on 23 May 2024, following evidence gathered during the statutory consultation.**
- 2. There to be no change to the existing Community Governance Arrangements within the North of the Borough and the Community Governance Review 2023 be concluded.**
- 3. To address outstanding boundary changes, with a new Community Governance Review, to commence after May 2025, following initial consultation with relevant stakeholders and with the timetable to be agreed.**

Reasons

The Council has responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews and is able to decide whether to give effect to recommendations made in those reviews within its areas. Chapter 3 of Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 is the overarching legislation that devolves the power to take decisions about matters such as the creation of Parishes and their electoral arrangements to local government and local communities. In making decisions the Council is required to take account of the views of local people. The 2007 Act provisions are intended to improve the development and coordination of support for residents and community groups so that they can make the best use of empowerment opportunities. Failure to follow the legal process set out in the 2007 Act could put the Council at risk of a legal challenge and a cost award being made against the Council.

64.3 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2025/26

Members were informed that council tax benefit ceased at the end of 2012/13 and was replaced by a Local Council Tax Support Scheme defined by each local authority. The Broxtowe scheme was first approved by Council on 19 December 2012. The new

scheme was effectively the government's default scheme with due allowance being made to allow the continuation of the discretionary policy relating to the treatment of war pensions.

The current scheme allows for up to 100% of the council tax liability to be paid in council tax support. The majority of local authorities had not adopted this approach and most had passed on some of the reduction in funding to the Scheme's recipients. The Council had benefitted from the overall bill for the Scheme falling in early years as the numbers of claimants requiring support reduced.

RESOLVED that the current Local Council Tax Support Scheme remains in place for 2025/26.

Reason

The Scheme allows for up to 100% of the council tax liability to be paid in council tax support.

65 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS FROM MAY 2025 TO APRIL 2026

Members considered the Programme of Meetings for the period between May 2025 and April 2026.

RESOLVED that the Programme of Meetings be approved.

Reason

This will assist the Council to achieve all of its corporate priorities.

66 MOTIONS

66.1 THE FOLLOWING MOTION WAS SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR S J CARR ON BEHALF OF THE BROXTOWE INDEPENDENT GROUP:

The motion was withdrawn Councillor S J Carr who stated that he had received legal advice which suggested this was not an appropriate time to debate the motion.

66.2 THE FOLLOWING MOTION WAS SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR D K WATTS ON BEHALF OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP:

The motion was deferred due to the imminent publication of legislation, which it was stated, may alter the content of the motion.

67 YOUTH MAYOR'S UPDATE ON BROXTOWE YOUTH VOICE ACTIVITIES

The Youth Mayor, Libby Bales, updated Members and stated that she had attended events such as the Christmas light switch-ons, Broxtowe Women's Project and a White Ribbon event.

68 MEMBERS' SPEECHES ON WARD ISSUES

Councillor M Radulovic MBE updated Members on issues relating to the ward of Eastwood Hill Top.

69 QUESTIONS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no questions in relation to Outside Bodies.

70 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

The following question had been submitted by Councillor D D Pringle for the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change:

“During the week before Remembrance Sunday, an inspection was carried out by a Contractor, appointed by Broxtowe Borough Council. This inspection resulted in over 70 Headstones being declared unsafe. Repair costs required, will result in charges of around £350, having to be met either by the families, relatives or the Church. Each headstone deemed unsafe was marked by a blue ribbon, with a yellow triangle attached, which stated what the issue is. Personally, I like many other people find marking headstones with a yellow triangle abhorrent. Atrocities carried out during the 2nd World War were done to people marked with yellow triangles. This occurrence, described as a ‘Human Error’ by Broxtowe Staff should never have happened.

Having read the ICCM (Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management) dated 2019, all memorials should be tested every five years. It raises questions: Was the competence of the appointed contractor examined? Was the contractor informed in writing, about which areas should be inspected? Was the diocese written to, to get permission to enter the graveyard to carry out the inspection?

If all of the above was carried out why, did ‘Human Error’ occur. An approved contractor would have known not to enter an “open” graveyard without written permission, and specific guidance from the Diocese. The document provided by the purchaser Broxtowe, should have detailed exactly the area to be inspected. The Diocese would have provided written instructions about how the process was carried out. Sadly, it would appear that due diligence was not applied, if that is the case. Should the repair costs be met by either the Council or it’s appointed Contractor, rather than the Church, families and relatives.

BS8415, was introduced in 2005, after the death of a Child in a Harrogate Cemetery in 2000. Has the Council been working to that standard since 2005, on its introduction, or has it suddenly realised that the 2015 revision, states Headstones and Memorials have to be inspected five yearly.

A dangerous or unstable memorial is defined as one that will move and continue to fall to the ground with the exertion of a force. It should be noted that a memorial that moves under pressure, a hand test for headstones up to 1.5 metres does not necessarily pose a danger and should be judged against the afore mentioned definition. Should headstones that didn’t continue to fall been labelled as unsafe?”

The Portfolio Holder responded by stating that the headstones posed serious risks to members of the public and the Church was communicated with on numerous occasions. The Portfolio Holder further stated that it was a mistake to go into the open area but the Church had not been undertaking checks and the Council should be thanked for its work.

71 APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

RESOLVED that Councillor E Williamson replace Councillor R D MacRae as the Broxtowe Independent Group's representative on the Local Joint Consultative Committee.