

## COUNCIL

Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,

on Thursday, 23rd September, 2021 at 7.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor Arnie Hankin in the Chair;

Councillors John Baird, Chris Baron,  
Kier Barsby, Jamie Bell, Will Bostock,  
Christian Chapman, Melanie Darrington,  
Samantha Deakin, Andy Gascoyne,  
Dale Grounds, Andrew Harding,  
David Hennigan, Tom Hollis, Trevor Locke,  
Rachel Madden, David Martin, Andy Meakin,  
Lauren Mitchell, Keir Morrison, Warren Nuttall,  
Matthew Relf, Kevin Rostance, Phil Rostance,  
Dave Shaw, John Smallridge, Helen-Ann Smith,  
David Walters, Lee Waters, Caroline Wilkinson,  
Daniel Williamson, John Wilmott and  
Jason Zadrozny.

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillors Jim Blagden and Sarah Madigan.

**Officers Present:** Lynn Cain, Ruth Dennis, Katherine Green,  
Theresa Hodgkinson, Peter Hudson, Mike Joy  
and Shane Wright.

### **C.34 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and/or Non-Registrable Interests**

No declarations of interest were made.

### **C.35 Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 29 July 2021, as now submitted, be received and approved.

### **C.36 Announcements from the Chairman, Leader, Members of the Cabinet and the Head of Paid Service**

The Chairman took the opportunity to announce that Members would be requested, at agenda item 7, to vote in a new Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Covid-19 Recovery Scrutiny Panel. He also mentioned that the District were aware of 3 outstanding sports people within Ashfield that should be commemorated for their achievements and in the near future the Council would be arranging something for them to mark their successes.

The Leader also welcomed Theresa Hodgkinson to the Chamber for the first time in her position as the new Chief Executive. He reiterated that she was the first permanent female Chief Executive since Ashfield District Council's inception in 1974 and that she had full and unequivocal support from the Chamber.

### **C.37 Questions from the Public**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, the following question had been submitted by Mr. Stewart Chalkley.

*“QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL HOUSING.*

*Ashfield District Council is proposing to develop housing on the allotment site on Wesley Street, Annesley Woodhouse. There has been a tremendous amount of inaccurate and mistruths coming from elected members of the Ashfield Independents.*

*CAN YOU, THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR SOCIAL HOUSING, PLEASE TELL ME:*

*As residents form Annesley want to produce their own fruit and vegetables, why has this site been targeted for development, when there is a waiting list for occupation?”*

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Council and Social Housing, Councillor Tom Hollis, responded to the question as follows:-

*“Thank you Mr. Chalkley for asking the question...and although many members of the public don't take the opportunity to ask many questions at these meetings, I certainly welcome the fact that you not only engage with the process but that you have come forward to ask the question. I appreciate that and I welcome your engagement.*

*Just to be clear Mr. Chalkley, and I hope you are happy with this, the Council as you have noticed is looking to improve a number of grot spots and underused areas across Ashfield and is trying to get the best use out of the land that Ashfield District Council is responsible for on behalf of the public. You would however appreciate that unlike private organisations the Council quite rightly follows a transparent process about considering its options.*

*Many of these options do include my portfolio in social housing. You will understand that we have a massive, long waiting list and only 7,500 houses to put people in. So often that is always a consideration on any site that we consider and in fact the Council has purchased a number of empty properties to clear them up and turn them into social housing and we also buy social housing off developers etc.*

*Particularly in relation to this site I probably am frustrated that you seem to have been misled by potentially other parties' interests. In fact, the site is a site that, while we considered our option for housing and going back to the point that any option we consider has to be in the public setting, quite rightly as your frustrations have been made clear, it is an allotment site and an allotment site that has a waiting list.*

*My colleague, sat to the left of me, Councillor Deakin, is the portfolio holder for said spaces and I am aware of her having an ambition to look at turning this into a well-used site. Although I can't say for sure what this Council is going to do Mr. Chalkley, it is a democratic process of which I'm only one thirty-fifth of the membership, I'd hope he'd trust that it is extremely likely that if he can read between the lines here, that this site will be made use of as an allotment site and I'd hope that he would help us in that endeavour Chairman."*

The Chairman then gave Mr. Chalkley the opportunity to ask a supplementary question and he responded as follows:-

*"Thank you, Chairman, and thank you Councillor Hollis. I think I'm pleased with your reply and it seems like it will be put back into allotments if that is the case. Surely it would be better to put it back into allotments than spend £70,000 relinquishing a covenant that I'm sure the criteria for it have not been met. I've been informed that Welbeck Estates and the National Allotment Society have opposed your proposals and they would like to see the 149 people that are on the allotments waiting list for the Kirkby in Ashfield District alone, being accommodated. So, I hope this can be done in the near future.*

*Would someone please give me that assurance?"*

The Portfolio Holder for Council and Social Housing, responded to the supplementary question as follows:-

*"Yes, with a simple and clear answer that Mr. Chalkley will be very pleased with when the official outcome is made clear. When the decision is made."*

### **C.38 Petitions**

No petitions were submitted for consideration.

### **C.39 Urgent Item: Appointment of new Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Covid-19 Recovery Scrutiny Panel**

In accordance with Council Rule of Procedure 5.1 (Urgent Items), the Chairman agreed to take the following item of business as an urgent item and to consider it at this point in the proceedings. The reason for the urgency was due to the current Covid-19 Recovery Scrutiny Panel Chairman's recent illness and ongoing treatment. All Members concurred with this course of action.

RESOLVED

- a) that the following re-appointments be made to the Covid-19 Recovery Scrutiny Panel:

Chairman:	Councillor Will Bostock to replace Councillor Jim Blagden
Vice-Chairman:	Councillor Davide Hennigan to replace Councillor Will Bostock

- b) the Council's heartfelt thoughts be forwarded to Councillor Jim Blagden with best wishes for a speedy recovery.

#### **C.40 Appointment to Outside Body**

Council was requested to re-appoint two representatives to an Outside Body.

RESOLVED

that Councillors Chris Baron and Jim Blagden be re-appointed as the Council's representatives on the Hucknall Relief in Need Charity for the term ending 30 November 2024.

#### **C.41 Recommendations from the Cabinet and the Council's Committees**

In accordance with the Council Procedure Rule 2(ix), Council considered the following recommendations:-

Minute No. CA.22

Cabinet – 20 September 2021

Public Spaces Protection Order 2021 Extension & Variation

RESOLVED

that approval be given to the extension, variation and associated budget for the existing Public Spaces Protection Order, as set out in the draft order appended to the Cabinet report, to commence on 1st October 2021.

Minute No. CA.22

Cabinet – 20 September 2021

2021/22 Forecast Outturn for General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital Programme as at July 2021

RESOLVED

that the amendments and the addition of new schemes to the Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26 and the funding of the Capital Programme, as set out in Section 7 and Appendix 3 of the Cabinet report, subject to an amendment to the original recommendation to allow the £700k budget increase for the Depot Roof to be funded by Capital Receipts rather than borrowing (resulting in the full value of the roof being funded from Capital Receipts at £950k), be approved.

Minute No. CA.22

Cabinet – 20 September 2021

Public Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy Updates

RESOLVED

the mid-point review and update of the Public Open Space Strategy action plan, as outlined in the Cabinet report, be approved.

Minute No. CA.22

Cabinet – 20 September 2021

Towns Fund and Future High Streets Fund

(At this point in the proceedings, Councillor Chris Baron, on behalf of himself and Councillor Melanie Darrington, declared a Non-Registrable Interest in relation to this item due to one of the buildings earmarked for purchase being their current place of work. Their interests were such that that remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting thereon.)

RESOLVED

approval be given to accept the Early Release Towns Fund Capital Funding, including the funding within the Capital Programme and delegate allocation of the funds to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Planning and the Corporate Finance Manager (and S151 Officer), in consultation with the Discover Ashfield Board.

**C.42 Updates from Members of the Cabinet on their Portfolio Activity**

Councillor Kier Barsby - Portfolio Holder for Environmental Improvements, Corporate Communications and Cross Portfolio Support

- Success of four open air cinema events
- Future High Streets Fund and Towns Fund ongoing development including Moor Market
- 26 press releases since last Council meeting regarding, amongst others, Hucknall and Kirkby Leisure Centre and Moor Market
- Promotion of the recent Vaccination Bus and its locations
- Website continuing to meet all accessibility requirements with all documents checked before publication
- Updated Mod.Gov system went live in August 2021 with upgrades to Members' iPads
- 100 new online forms now available on the Council's website
- New Events website page currently being developed
- Covid Scrutiny Panel continuing to focus on District recovery and Standards Working Group progressing with work on the Members' Code of Conduct, Standards in Public Life recommendations and the Complaints process

- Legal continuing to support officers particularly with Community Safety and the new Public Spaces Protection Order and CCTV Policy
- The 2021 election canvass had received a good response with face-to-face and doorstep canvassing returning (with Covid-secure processes in place)
- The Polling Places Review Working Group to be reconvened imminently.

#### Councillor Matthew Relf - Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Planning

- The Draft Local Plan consultation exercise commencement date of 4 October 2021 with wide ranging promotion across all Council media platforms
- Concerns around the 457 Government housing allocation for Ashfield for each year (resulting in a total of 8,226 for the life of the Plan) and subsequent lobbying of local MP's to campaign to reduce Government housing requirements
- Benefits of the new Draft Local Plan proposing two new mixed-use settlements with supporting and self-sustaining infrastructure.

#### Councillor Sam Deakin - Portfolio Holder for Parks, Town Centres and Neighbourhood Services

- The Towns 'Welcome Back' funding being utilised to promote the Council's town centres including art exhibitions, music in towns, food and drinks festival, repainting of high street furniture and murals on buildings
- Update on improvements to play facilities around the District including Titchfield Park, Hucknall, Huthwaite Welfare Park and Sudbury Drive Play Area
- Masterplan progressing for Selston Country Park
- Tree planting initiative now mapped out with work progressing with external partners
- Waste Team continuing to provide an efficient service to the District
- Thanks and appreciation to the Environment Team for supporting recent events on parks and in the town centres
- Delivery of the Silverhill Pit Wheels from storage at the Depot back to the former Silverhill Colliery site.

#### Councillor Rachel Madden - Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Health and Wellbeing

- Events over the summer being a success including the food programmes, the 'Feel Good Families' events and Playfest which took place in the three designated priority areas

- The Premier League Kicks programme continuing to be facilitated in partnership with Nottingham Forest, Nottinghamshire Police and Sutton Academy
- Applications for Ashfield Community Development Grants (as managed by Notts. Community Foundation) were now being taken with £10,000 of funding available
- Production of a 'Feeding Ashfield' educational leaflet
- Volunteering opportunities continuing to open up with details on the Council's website
- Success of four open air cinema events
- Ongoing recruitment for a new Events & Place Officer
- Improvement and build works continuing at the Lammas, Hucknall and new Kirkby Leisure Centres.

#### Councillor John Wilmott - Portfolio Holder for Licensing, Environmental Health and Regulatory Services

- High risk inspections continuing with full service being resumed
- Highest ever rate of food premise applications with a 28 day turnaround being achieved
- Animal welfare inspections are now commencing as a priority
- Air and water quality inspections are continuing
- Recently advertised for four new members of staff with appointments hopefully being made by the end of October
- Increase in new driver and vehicle licence applications following update to taxi licensing fees schedule
- Recruitment of new Licensing Officer
- Income stream continuing from pavement licences
- Traders being offered licensing payment schemes and instalments to assist them to recover business following the pandemic
- Alcohol and Entertainment applications are back up to pre-Covid levels
- Currently out to consultation on the statutory Gambling Policy review
- Recent update to the Aids and Adaptations Policy and an increase to the level of Disabled Facilities Grant available

- Selective Licensing Scheme review underway and being reported to Cabinet in December.

#### **C.43 Notice of Motion 1**

The Council received a notice of motion moved by Councillor Helen-Ann Smith and seconded by Councillor Dave Shaw as follows:-

*“Ashfield District Council notes the government’s Elections Bill, which is undergoing its second reading in the House of Commons, will require individuals to show photographic ID for UK Parliamentary elections in Great Britain, local elections in England, and Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales.*

*It further notes a Cabinet Office impact assessment that estimates the policy will cost up to £180million. £180million would buy 15,316 hip operations, 5,986 new ventilators or 9.9million hours of tutoring in schools.*

*This Council acknowledges that there were 171 allegations of in-person voter fraud at polling stations in Local and Parliamentary elections from 2014 to 2019 - of which three led to a conviction.*

*This Council believes that at a time when the country is facing huge financial challenges due to COVID-19, spending up to £180million over ten years on a Voter ID scheme to make it harder for people to vote in elections is wrong both morally and shows a lack of priorities.*

*Ashfield District Council believes that Voter Identification laws are a costly solution to a problem that does not exist and is a distraction from our recovery from Covid-19.*

*This Council notes the views of charities including Save the Children, independent campaign groups such as Greenpeace, and the trades union movement, who have condemned the Election’s Bill as “...an attack on the UK’s proud democratic tradition and some of our most fundamental rights”.*

*The types of ID accepted include passports, driving licences and blue badge cards, yet according to a UK-wide study commissioned by the Cabinet Office, more than 2 million people lack the necessary ID to take part in UK elections.*

*This Council believes that thousands of residents in the Ashfield District do not own photo ID. These proposed laws will disproportionately effect areas with higher levels of deprivation across the Ashfield District. Poorer residents, the elderly, the young and people with disabilities will be impacted.*

*Ashfield District Council therefore agrees to write to the Secretary of State for Justice, who is responsible for constitutional affairs and all Nottinghamshire MPs requesting that they oppose the photo identification element of the Elections Bill currently going through Parliament.”*

Having been fully considered, the motion was put to the vote and it was

**RESOLVED**

that the Council agrees to write to the Secretary of State for Justice, who is responsible for constitutional affairs and all Nottinghamshire MPs requesting that they oppose the photo identification element of the Elections Bill currently going through Parliament.

#### **C.44 Notice of Motion 2**

The Council received a notice of motion moved by Councillor David Martin and seconded by Councillor Lee Waters as follows:-

*“Ashfield District Council notes that General practice in England has faced an extremely challenging time during the COVID-19 pandemic. It further notes that according to the latest figures available from the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group – nearly 25,000 residents across Nottinghamshire had to wait more than a month for a GP appointment in June and that nearly 40% of residents don’t have access to face to face consultations anymore.*

*Ashfield District Council believes that access to a GP is a post-code lottery and is creating a health care crisis which is especially acute in places like Hucknall and the Selston Parish.*

*This Council believes that residents should have access to high-quality GP care when they need it.*

*This Council notes with the number of GPs falling - due to lack of recruitment and retention and with the population rising, demands on GPs are higher than ever. There are millions of patients whose treatment has been delayed due to the pandemic, more tests to administer and additional bureaucracy. GP workload is becoming unmanageable.*

*GPs and their teams cannot meet this challenge without more support.*

*This Council is calling on the UK Government to provide the funding and commitment needed to urgently increase the number of GPs, practice nurses and other practice staff and to improve the premises in which they work. This will help GP practices in the Ashfield District and across England to meet the growing needs of people in our communities, providing the care we and our families need.*

*This Council backs the campaign by the British Medical Association – “Support your Surgery” – which calls for Government investment in general practice to provide better services, better buildings and more GPs and practice staff.*

*This Council therefore resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care – the Right Honourable Sajid Javid MP and Lucy Dudge, the Chief Commissioning Officer of the NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group highlighting the health inequalities that exist in the Ashfield District.”*

Having been fully considered, the motion was put to the vote and it was

RESOLVED

that the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, the Right Honourable Sajid Javid MP and Lucy Dudge, the Chief Commissioning Officer of the NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group, highlighting the health inequalities that exist in the Ashfield District. (In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 23 (Conclusion of Proceedings), it was moved by Councillor Jason Zadrozny and seconded by Councillor Helen-Ann Smith that the conclusion of proceedings be extended to 9.30pm accordingly. Having been put to the vote, the Council agreed with this course of action.)

#### **C.45 Notice of Motion 3**

The Council received a notice of motion moved by Councillor Jason Zadrozny and seconded by Councillor Samantha Deakin as follows:-

*“Ashfield District Council notes with regret that tens of thousands of families claiming Universal Credit and Working Tax Credits in the county will lose more than £1,000 a year when the uplift to the benefits is lifted. The Government plan to remove its £20 per week uplift – brought in to support struggling families through the pandemic from October 6.*

*This Council notes that 5 out of 10 people affected by this are in work yet the Government claim that stopping this uplift is “...a shift to getting people back to work.” This Council therefore believes that stopping this uplift is purely an ideological attack on the poorest residents of Ashfield and the rest of the country.*

*It will mean a loss of £1,040 to the current, overall annual package received by claimants in the Ashfield District, or around £86.66 per month. This Council believes that these plans mean the biggest overnight reduction to a basic rate of social security since the modern welfare state began more than 70 years ago.*

*This Council notes that families with children will be disproportionately impacted and six in 10 of all single-parent families in the UK will be impacted.*

*In the Ashfield Constituency, this cut will adversely impact 9150 families. In the Sherwood Constituency it will adversely impact 7520 families currently in receipt of Universal Credit or Working Tax credits according to figures released by the Joseph Roundtree Foundation.*

*This Council believes:*

- (1) That failing to maintain the recent uplift will have a devastating effect on 16,670 families in the Ashfield and Sherwood constituencies at a time when they need financial support the most and will increase hardship and poverty for people who are already struggling.*
- (2) That reducing benefits will have an adverse impact on child poverty, other poverty levels and the financial health and well-being of people of the poorest in our County.*

*This Council therefore resolves to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer -*

*The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions -  
Thérèse Coffey MP to ask them to reverse this decision and to strengthen the  
support offered by Universal Credit and Working Tax Credits.”*

Having been fully considered, the motion was put to the vote and it was

RESOLVED

that the Council writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, The Rt. Hon. Rishi Sunak MP and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Thérèse Coffey MP, to ask them to reverse the decision and to strengthen the support offered by Universal Credit and Working Tax Credits.

**C.46 Questions received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13**

There were no questions submitted by Members.

**C.47 Questions received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.2 - In relation to Cabinet and Committee Meeting Minutes published since the last ordinary meeting of the Council**

There were no questions submitted by Members.

The meeting closed at 9.08 pm

Chairman.