

## COUNCIL

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

on Thursday, 27th January, 2022 at 7.00 pm

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

Councillors John Baird, Chris Baron,  
Kier Barsby, Jim Blagden, Will Bostock,  
Christian Chapman, Samantha Deakin,  
Andy Gascoyne, Dale Grounds, Andrew Harding,  
David Hennigan, Trevor Locke, Rachel Madden,  
David Martin, Andy Meakin, Keir Morrison,  
Warren Nuttall, 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 Jamie Bell, Melanie Darrington,  
Tom Hollis, Sarah Madigan, Lauren Mitchell and  
Matthew Relf.

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

### **C.60 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and/or Non-Registrable Interests**

No declarations of interest were made.

### **C.61 Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 2 December 2021, as  
now submitted, be received and approved.

### **C.62 Announcements from the Chairman, Leader, Members of the Cabinet and the Head of Paid Service**

#### Chief Executive

The Chief Executive took the opportunity to address Members, after almost six  
months in post, to outline some exciting opportunities for the District and to  
acknowledge the Council's outstanding performance.

Significant amounts of monies were due to be invested into Ashfield over the next five years with the award of over £70m Towns' funding for Sutton and Kirkby. Two more business cases had been approved the previous week by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for Portland Square, Sutton and Visitor Digital projects.

Hucknall Town Centre masterplan was also being finalised and work was being carried out with Hucknall Councillors on developing a levelling up bid for Hucknall.

Cabinet had recently reviewed the level of delivery and performance achieved on its corporate plan priorities to date and had noted significant levels of delivery of priorities, despite the impacts of the pandemic. Sincere thanks were extended to employees of the Council for going above and beyond expectations by both the Chief Executive and previously by Members at their Cabinet meeting.

Residents and Council Members were also reassured that the Council's finances were being well managed. External Audit opinion on the Council's 2020/21 accounts had again achieved an unqualified audit opinion.

The Local Government Association (LGA) financial health check of the Council's finances had now been finalised and the confirmed position was that an assurance had been given that finances were being managed effectively. Council was asked to note that this was contrary to recent misleading information being reported in various media channels. A full report was due to go to Cabinet in February 2022, but a list of headlines from the financial health checks were outlined at the meeting.

To conclude, Council was reassured that although a significant proportion of Council debt did relate to purchased investment properties, the annual rental income from the properties covered both the annual debt and interest costs associated with them. In addition, it made a significant annual contribution of well above £2 million towards the operating costs of many of the Council's services.

### **C.63 Questions from the Public**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, the following questions had been submitted by Mr. Bryce Humphreys:

#### Question 1

To the Leader of the Council:

*"The phrase "local plan is paused" I have heard used on many occasion even during the consultation period of the draft local plan and when Micheal Gove announced there may be changes in the way the calculations are worked out for housing needs it was used and been said by yourself on a few occasions however when I speak to planning as far as they are concerned it's not paused and they are working to the set time line that was originally set by having everything ready to submit to government for March sometime and as far as they are concerned it's not paused.*

*So can you please Clarify what you mean by using the phrase “local plan is paused” as it is becoming confusing especially when the planning department tell you its not paused.”*

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Jason Zadrozny, responded and acknowledged that there may have been some confusion as the announcement to pause development of the Draft Local Plan had been made during the consultation period.

He advised Mr. Humphreys that there would be no progression of the Draft Local Plan until clarity from the Government had been obtained in relation to the methodology for calculating standard housing need and their position regarding building on greenfield sites.

Ashfield District Council housing requirements currently stood at 457 houses per annum or 8,226 houses in total up to 2038. The Council had a good record of building on brownfield sites but there were not enough of these sites left in the District to fulfil the full housing requirement.

In the Draft Local Plan, 1,100 homes could be built on existing brownfield sites and some windfall sites might become available during the life of the Plan but this would still not prevent development on greenfield or greenbelt sites to meet the current requirements should the Government’s methodology not be changed.

In respect of the Draft Local Plan being paused, the Leader confirmed that this would not prevent the Forward Planning team from continuing to work on the responses to the consultation and to continue any necessary evidence gathering to support the new Plan, as required, prior to receipt of clarification from Government.

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

*“I have the development here and on the back is a schedule with rough months showing the timetable and March/April is when the actual Local Plan is to be issued for further consultation this year. Are you saying that unless you get clarification as to the housing figures, then that is not going to happen in March/April? If we end up not getting clarification until the end of March, are you going to push it back 2 months?”*

The Leader of the Council responded to the supplementary question by clarifying that the Local Plan timeframe was indefinite and that it could and probably would change, dependent on the response from Government.

## Question 2

To the Leader of the Council:

*“Stubbing Wood Farm is Greenbelt and the last bit of greenbelt at the end and behind the houses of Watnall Rd in Hucknall and where I live just before we meet with Broxtowe council area.*

*The land being clay on bedrock is natural flood area and to help prevent flooding onto the properties that back onto the land and the 3 properties that are on the land a dyke was put in place many years ago around the perimeter of the fields. The flooding can be that bad I have installed French drain within my garden to remove the water quicker to stop potential flooding into my home and I have seen the water running down the access lane like a stream on many occasions.*

*This land which is greenbelt would be better used for planting British Native trees and native wildflowers which then intern help our pollinators as well other wildlife and would also help with the flooding of the land. Bearing in mind there is government subsidies for this especially with the land being clay and not very good for crop growing due to the clay and flooding and the latest subsidy scheme is the land recovery scheme which is used for pockets of land like stubbing wood farm which is greenbelt to grow our native plants and trees especially with the current climate change crisis we now live in.*

*Surely you should be helping and encouraging landowners / farmers and assisting them to claim the subsidies from government to transform pockets of land like stubbing wood farm which is greenbelt to claim these subsidies to rewild instead of wanting to build houses on greenbelt land and add more pollution and traffic to an area that is gridlocked every day.”*

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Jason Zadrozny, responded by confirming that the Stubbing Wood Farm had been identified in the Draft Local Plan for a potential development of up to 109 residential properties with a Council statement included in the Plan outlining exceptional circumstances for the release of any such earmarked greenbelt land within the District. The Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) document had also identified the land as located in Flood Zone 1 and the Council were aware of previous surface water flooding around the area.

He advised Mr. Humphreys that any new developments of this nature would most likely be subject to an urban drainage scheme and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Environment Act also encouraged biodiversity on all new sites. In addition, the Council had also stated in the Draft Local Plan that trees should be retained wherever possible on any new developments, but should any ultimately require removal, at least 2 trees would need to be replanted for every tree lost on the same site or any alternate site as identified.

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

*“With Stubbing Wood Farm, and I appreciate what you have just said, there are two aspects that I feel have not been properly disclosed to the Council originally, which I know for a fact.*

*There are three properties on the land which weren't disclosed, two properties off Olympus Court and the other one was my property which is smack bang in the middle between the rear and front field. I actually found out by a lamppost which looked like you were demolishing my property. Disclosure wasn't done properly by the landowner and Planning is aware of this as I have supplied all my registered documents from when I purchased the property 45 years ago."*

The Leader of the Council responded to the supplementary question and acknowledged Mr. Humphrey's legitimate concerns regarding his property. He confirmed that the Planning Team would always gather pertinent evidence properly prior to any decisions being made and, in any event, the Council were categorically not up for compulsorily purchasing any properties and turning people out of their homes. He concluded by offering to speak further with Mr. Humphreys and the Planning Team, should any additional reassurances be required.

#### **C.64 Petitions**

No petitions were submitted for consideration.

#### **C.65 Changes to Committee Memberships**

Council was requested to consider changes to Committee memberships as requested by the Ashfield Independent Group and as circulated.

RESOLVED

that the following changes be made to the Council's Committee memberships:

##### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (7)** **(6 Ashfield Independents, 1 Conservative)**

Chris Baron  
Jim Blagden  
Will Bostock  
Dale Grounds (Vice Chairman)  
Andrew Harding (Chairman)  
David Walters  
Lee Waters

##### **Scrutiny Panel A (7)** **(6 Ashfield Independents, 1 Labour)**

Jim Blagden  
Trevor Locke  
Lauren Mitchell  
Warren Nuttall  
Dave Shaw (Chairman)  
David Walters  
Caroline Wilkinson (Vice Chairman)

**Scrutiny Panel B (7)**

**(6 Ashfield Independents, 1 Non-Aligned Independent)**

Jim Blagden  
Christian Chapman (Chairman)  
Melanie Darrington  
Dale Grounds  
Trevor Locke (Vice Chairman)  
David Walters  
Caroline Wilkinson

**COVID-19 Recovery Scrutiny Panel (7)**

**(5 Ashfield Independents, 1 Conservative, 1 Non-Aligned Independent)**

Jim Blagden  
Will Bostock (Chairman)  
Dale Grounds  
Daniel Williamson (Vice Chairman)  
Kevin Rostance  
Caroline Wilkinson  
Vacancy

**Planning Committee (9)**

**(7 Ashfield Independents, 1 Conservative, 1 Labour)**

Samantha Deakin  
Arnie Hankin  
Rachel Madden  
Sarah Madigan (Chairman)  
Andy Meakin (Vice Chairman)  
Lauren Mitchell  
Phil Rostance  
Helen-Ann Smith  
Jason Zadrozny

**Licensing Committee (9)**

**(7 Ashfield Independents, 1 Labour, 1 Non Aligned Independent)**

Jamie Bell  
Jim Blagden  
Dale Grounds  
Arnie Hankin  
Melanie Darrington  
Trevor Locke  
Lauren Mitchell  
Warren Nuttall (Chairman)  
Caroline Wilkinson

**Audit Committee (7)**

**(6 Ashfield Independents, 1 Conservative)**

John Baird  
Jim Blagden  
Will Bostock  
Christian Chapman  
Kevin Rostance  
Dave Shaw  
David Walters (Chairman)

**Charities Committee (7)**

**(5 Ashfield Independents, 1 Labour, 1 Non-Aligned Independent)**

Jamie Bell (Chairman)  
Jim Blagden  
Melanie Darrington  
Dale Grounds  
Lauren Mitchell  
David Walters  
Caroline Wilkinson

**Chief Officers' Employment Committee (7)**

**(6 Ashfield Independents, 1 Conservative)**

Chris Baron  
Tom Hollis  
David Shaw  
Helen-Ann Smith  
David Walters  
Daniel Williamson  
Jason Zadrozny (Chairman)

**Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee (7)**

**(5 Ashfield Independents, 1 Conservative, 1 Non-Aligned Independent)**

Chris Baron  
Jim Blagden  
Christian Chapman  
David Hennigan  
Warren Nuttall  
Helen Ann-Smith  
Lee Waters (Chairman)

**Local Plan Working Group (9)**

**(9 Ashfield Independents, 1 Conservative, 1 Labour)**

Samantha Deakin  
Arnie Hankin  
Rachel Madden (Chairman)  
Keir Morrison  
Matthew Relf  
Kevin Rostance  
Helen-Ann Smith  
Lee Waters  
Jason Zadrozny

**Local Joint Consultative Committee (7)**

**(Not subject to political balance rules)**

Samantha Deakin  
Tom Hollis  
David Martin  
Matthew Relf  
Helen-Ann Smith  
Daniel Williamson  
Jason Zadrozny

## **C.66 Recommendations from the Cabinet and the Council's Committees**

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

Minute No.

Cabinet – 25 January 2022

Development of Unviable Garage Sites In Kirkby In Ashfield and Hucknall

RESOLVED

that the housing development, as outlined in the Cabinet report, be added to the Council's Capital programme.

(During consideration of this item, Councillor Kier Barsby declared a Non-Registrable interest due to the fact that he was currently a Council tenant. His interest was such that he stayed in the room and took part in the discussion and voting thereon.)

## **C.67 Updates from Members of the Cabinet on their Portfolio Activity**

The following Cabinet Members gave updates in relation to their portfolio activity:

1. Councillor Helen-Ann Smith – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Crime Reduction
2. Councillor Samantha Deakin - Portfolio Holder for Parks, Town Centres and Neighbourhood Services
3. Councillor Rachel Madden – Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Health and Wellbeing
4. Councillor David Martin – Portfolio Holder for Finance, Revenues and Benefits
5. Councillor Daniel Williamson - Portfolio Holder for Customer Services, Corporate Change and Digital Transformation
6. Councillor John Wilmott - Portfolio Holder for Licensing, Environmental Health and Regulatory Services
7. Councillor Kier Barsby - Portfolio Holder for Environmental Improvements, Corporate Communications and Cross Portfolio Support.

(During the Cabinet Member updates, Councillor Christian Chapman entered the meeting at 7.45pm.)

## **C.68 Notices of Motion.**

There were no notices of motion submitted by Members.

**C.69 Questions received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.**

There were no questions submitted by Members.

**C.70 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 8.17 pm

Chairman.