

COUNCIL

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

on Monday, 15th April, 2024 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Dale Grounds in the Chair;

Councillors Kier Barsby, Jamie Bell, Will Bostock, Ian Briggs, Jodine Cronshaw, Samantha Deakin, Andy Gascoyne, Paul Grafton, Julie Gregory, Arnie Hankin, Oliver Hay, Vicki Heslop, Dawn Justice, Trevor Locke, Rachel Madden, Sarah Madigan, Gordon Mann, Cathy Mason, Andy Meakin, Warren Nuttall, Matthew Relf, Phil Rostance, Dave Shaw, John Smallridge, Helen-Ann Smith, David Walters, Lee Waters, John Wilmott and Jason Zadrozny.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Anna Ellis, Tom Hollis, Christopher Huskinson, Sarah Lewsey and Nicholas Parvin.

Officers Present: John Bennett, Lynn Cain, Ruth Dennis, Theresa Hodgkinson, Peter Hudson, Mike Joy, David Needham and Shane Wright.

In Attendance: Martin Rigley

C.86 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and/or Non-Registrable Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

C.87 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 12 February and 4 March 2024, as now submitted, be received and approved.

C.88 Announcements from the Chairman, Leader, Members of the Cabinet and the Head of Paid Service

Chairman of the Council

The Chairman took the opportunity to give an update in respect of the events he had hosted and attended since March 2024 including some details in respect of the 'Black Tie' event that was due to be held at Coxmoor Golf Club

the following week.

Executive Lead Member for Community Safety and Crime Reduction

Councillor Wilmott advised the Chamber of a letter he had recently received from three children who had set up a project called Eco Kiddies, which produced organic cotton socks for sale to raise funds for poorly children in local hospitals. He asked Members to support the initiative and donate if they possibly could.

Leader of the Council

Councillor Jason Zadrozny firstly drew Members' attention to an organisation called 'BorrowMyDoggy' which offered support with pet duties to people who were struggling. Services included walks, weekends and overnight stays. The organisation offered a great support service and Members could signpost residents if needed.

Secondly, it had recently come to light that the County Council were undertaking a review of recycling centres (Kirkby and Hucknall centres were included) with the possibility of future closures. At a previous County Council meeting Ashfield Independent Members had vehemently disagreed with the proposals and Members could voice their concerns via petitions on Change.Org etc.

Lastly, the Leader wished to bring to the Chamber's attention that he had requested the Chief Executive to investigate a recent leak of a classified document by a Member, to the local MP. The information was shared online and the document had included contact details of a member of staff who had suffered some distress as a result of the incident. It was hoped a conclusion to the incident would be reached in a timely manner.

Councillor Will Bostock

Councillor Bostock advised with sadness that John Hill had recently passed away. John had been an active member of the Sutton community for numerous years and had been a great mentor to many through Sutton Community Academy and Sutton in Ashfield Harriers & Athletics Club.

(During the announcements, Councillor Sarah Madigan entered the meeting at 7.16pm.)

C.89 Presentation of Awards

Firstly the Chairman confirmed that since the last meeting of Council, Ashfield District Council had been a finalist in the Employee Development category at the Building Communities Awards.

Secondly, the Chairman took the opportunity to welcome Martin Rigley to the meeting and present him with a token of the Council's appreciation in recognition of his work and commitment towards promoting and developing the District of Ashfield.

As both a resident and former owner of a business in Ashfield, Martin continued to be passionate about promoting Ashfield as a great place to run a business, live, visit, raise a family and be educated.

C.90 Questions from the Public

No questions were received for consideration.

C.91 Petitions

No petitions were received for consideration.

C.92 Updated Policy for the granting of Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Relief

Council was requested to receive and approve the updated Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief Policy, as presented.

RESOLVED

that the updated Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief Policy, as presented and as shown at Appendix A, be approved to take effect from 1 April 2024.

C.93 Ashfield District Council Golden Anniversary

Council was asked to note the arrangements in place to celebrate the Council's Golden Anniversary, since being formed in 1974, and to reflect on the achievements and service delivery of the Council over the past half century.

RESOLVED

that the Ashfield District Council's Golden Anniversary, marking 50 years of serving Ashfield residents and businesses, be noted and duly celebrated.

C.94 Recommendations from the Cabinet and the Council's Committees

Council was requested to consider and approve two recommendations from Cabinet.

Minute No. CA.67

Cabinet – 8 April 2024

2023/24 Forecast Outturn for General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital Programme as at December 2023

RESOLVED

that the amendments and the addition of new schemes to the Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28, and the funding of the Capital Programme as set out in Section 6 and Appendix 3 of the Cabinet report, be approved.

RESOLVED

that following receipt of funds, it be agreed that Section 106 monies be included on the Capital Programme, as outlined in the Cabinet report.

C.95 Updates from Members of the Cabinet on their Portfolio Activity

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

Councillor Vicki Heslop – Executive Lead Member for Governance

Councillor Matthew Relf – Executive Lead Member for Growth, Regeneration and Local Planning

Councillor John Wilmott – Executive Lead Member for Community Safety and Crime Reduction

Councillor Helen-Ann Smith – Deputy Leader and Executive Lead Member for Parks and Environmental Services.

(During the Cabinet Member updates, Councillor Cathy Mason left the meeting at 8.16pm.)

C.96 Notices of Motion

No motions were received for consideration.

C.97 Questions received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13

Question 1

Councillor Kier Barsby to the Deputy Leader and Executive Lead Member for Strategic Housing and Climate Change:

“According to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, current figures for homeless children in England and Wales: 142,490.

Between 2019-2023 there were 55 deaths in temporary accommodation. 42 of those deaths were children under the age of one.

Can you confirm how many children, as of April 2024, are on Ashfield District Council’s waiting list, and how many are under 1? Also, how many are in temporary accommodation including hostels, temporary housing, rough sleeping, sofa surfing etc?”

Due to the fact that the Deputy Leader, Councillor Tom Hollis, was not in

attendance at the meeting, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jason Zadrozny, responded and firstly thanked Councillor Barsby for his question.

He advised that currently 4,350 applicants were on the Council's housing register with 1,584 of them being families with children and 231 being families with children under one years of age. He did not have access to data in relation to children in temporary accommodation at the present time but advised that a full response would be given by an officer after the meeting.

Regarding rough sleeping, Councillor Barsby was advised that no children were sleeping out on the streets, and it was reiterated that no one should need to be rough sleeping in Ashfield with all the services and support that the Council currently provided.

Many projects were running to help support homeless people and families with temporary or emergency accommodation notwithstanding the fact that the Council did not have enough housing stock and were trying to manage unprecedented applications for housing through the register. However, priority building programmes had been underway for some time to provide as many new homes as possible to add to the Council's housing stock.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.5, Councillor Barsby was invited to ask a supplementary question as follows:

“Could the Leader or the Portfolio Holder report either every full Council or quarterly, on the actual figures because I understand that we don't keep backdated figures to see where we were and where we are now. If it can be brought to this full Council, maybe every other meeting, to make sure we are not going beyond the expectations of Ashfield Council.”

The Leader responded again by agreeing that this was a good idea and the data should be regular and reportable to enable Members to check and monitor the situation.

He suggested that the Principal Select Committee could receive the updates and officers could work around some benchmarking/performance indicators for tracking purposes. The Council had long since been passionate about social housing and the information would be both useful and informative to all Members.

Question 2

Councillor Kier Barsby to the Deputy Leader and Executive Lead Member for Strategic Housing and Climate Change:

“Would you agree with me that the newly passed Damp and Mould Policy does not go far enough with beating this dreaded menace in both Council homes and privately rented homes? Would you agree that all private landlords are encouraged to sign up to the charter of good landlords that the Council has going in the New Cross area of Sutton in Ashfield, and to give the Policy more sanctions that this Council can use against dreadful appalling bad private landlords who constantly misuse this Policy?”

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Jason Zadrozny, responded and advised

that the Council took the blight of damp and mould in homes very seriously with the Council producing a new Damp and Mould Policy to sit alongside recent legislative changes. A new technical officer had also been recruited to deal with damp and mould cases within Council properties.

In relation to private sector properties, a new enforcement policy was in place which outlined how the Environmental Health Team would deal with damp and mould issues and £130,000 of external funding had been secured for a new Healthy Homes Programme. An additional officer was also being recruited and the Council would be working collaboratively with private landlords. In addition, the small minority of landlords who failed to address damp and mould issues within their properties in a timely manner, would be dealt with swiftly and comprehensively in accordance with the law.

The Leader concluded that it would probably be prudent to let the new Damp and Mould Policy settle in for six months and then refer it for Member review at one of the Council's select committees.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.5, Councillor Barsby was again invited to ask a supplementary question as follows:

"Thank you for your comments Leader. I would like to make a recommendation that the Damp and Mould Policy is referred to the Principal Select Committee for review following six months of initial operation."

C.98 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

No questions were received from Members.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm

Chairman.