

Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 21st September, 2023 at The Ballroom, Retford Town Hall, DN22 6DB

Present: Councillor D J Merryweather (Chairman)

Councillors:

D Bamford	J Bowker
H M Brand	R B Carrington-Wilde
M Carroll	D Challinor
M Charlesworth	A Coultate
G Dinsdale	L A Dixon
J Evans	S Fielding
E M Griffin	D Henderson
J A Leigh	F Merryweather
J Naish	D G Pidwell
J Potts	D R Pressley
D E Pulk	M Richardson
L A Sanders	N J Sanders
J M Sanger MBE	L Schuller
S E Shaw	J G Slater
L Stanniland	C Tindle
C Troop	J White

Officers in attendance: S Bacon, C Hopkinson and M Wildman.

(The meeting opened at 6.30 pm.)

34 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C L Adams, H Digby, P J Ducey, T P Eaton BCA, C Entwistle, G Freeman, J M Horrocks, J O Manners, F McFarland, D A Naylor, G A M Oxby, A Rhodes, S Scotthorne and J C Shephard.

35 Declarations

There were no Declarations of Interest.

36 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meetings held on 22nd June, 13th July and 31st July be approved.

37 Motions to Full Council - Action and Implementation

Resolved that the Previous Motions Action and Implementation be noted.

38 Communications

Chairman's Communications:

The Chairman thanked Members for the opportunity of Chairman. She noted that she had attended a lot of engagements since the last meeting including:

- The Canch and Kings' Park Flag Raising
- Nottinghamshire Day Flag Raising
- Bassetlaw Supports Ukraine
- Tour of Britain
- Kings Award
- Onam Celebration
- Rushcliffe Annual Civic Dinner
- Broxtowe Civic Service
- Corporal Thomas Highton CWWG Headstone

She noted that it is her Civic Service on Sunday and all are welcome.

Chief Executive's Communications:

There were none.

Leaders Update:

The Leader noted that there has been a lot of work conducted since the last meeting. He updated Members on key activities:

- Wilko response
- Vision 2040 consultation
- Main Modifications to the Draft Local Plan consultation
- Meetings have continued in five main areas:
 - Devolution:
 - STEP:
 - National Grid 'North Humber to High Marnham' upgrade
 - Power station resident group meetings
 - Levelling Up Partnerships
- Updates on Head of Service positions
- Prosperity Fund activities

Finally, he informed Members that Thatchams Research has been shortlisted for a national award by the Association for Project Management and wished them the very best for the awards ceremony in London on 20th November.

39 Questions by the Public

There were none.

40 Questions by Members

From Councillor D. Bamford:

“In light of recent changes to economic forecasts can the council supply a projected profit and loss for S80 over the next five years which shows the financial impact on S80 and shareholders and its ability to repay the proposed £200,000 loan facility if utilised. Further will it clearly show the projected position of the balance sheet?”

Response from Councillor J Evans:

“Can I please give a response under Agenda Item No.9(a) with the related report.

(The Chairman confirmed that this was acceptable)

41 Motions

Proposed by Councillor A. Coultate and seconded by Councillor G. Dinsdale:

“This Council calls upon the Police and Crime Commissioner for Nottinghamshire to ensure that Bassetlaw receives its fair share of resources (including accessible Custody Services) and no longer has a “second rate Police Station” within the District.”

Councillor J Bowker proposed the following amendment:

“This Council calls upon the Police and Crime Commissioner for Nottinghamshire **to meet her election commitment** to ensure that Bassetlaw receives its fair share of resources (including accessible Custody Services) and no longer has a “second rate Police Station” within the District.”

The Council Solicitor advised that it was a valid amendment and it was accepted by the proposer of the motion.

Resolved that the amended motion be supported.

Proposed by Councillor J. White and seconded by Councillor J. Leigh:

“This Council:

- Is saddened and disappointed that Wilko Ltd’s negative trading situation led to it entering into administration on 10th August 2023 with administrators, PwC, appointed on 23rd August 2023.
- Recognises that this is a well-known and popular British retail company, a traditional family firm headquartered in Worksop which employs around 12,000 people across the country. Of these, more than 1,500 are based in Bassetlaw, working in its stores, distribution centre and head office.
- Is disappointed that, at the time of submission of this motion, an outright buyer has not been found and that the company will be divided with many employees now facing redundancy, including employees based at the distribution centre and head office on Roebuck Way, Worksop.
- Believes that there are a number of factors that have caused this business failure, including but not exclusively limited to the shift in consumer behaviours to online shopping, Wilko’s strategic response to market change and Government failure to overhaul high street business rates.
- Is disappointed that despite Wilko playing a significant role in the life of hundreds of high streets and communities across the UK, the Government has shown limited interest in alleviating the situation.
- Has a responsibility to support Bassetlaw-based Wilko workers at this time of crisis. It has, and will continue to, prioritise resources to do this alongside partners such as Citizens Advice Bassetlaw and DWP, including through the delivery of a full support

service and by building links with local/regional/cross-regional employers to run jobs and support fairs.

- Is committed to supporting the Bassetlaw workforce at this difficult time and recognises that this is an ongoing responsibility of the Council as the local economy and workforce absorbs the impact of this sadly avoidable situation.

Councillors D Bamford, C Tindle, J Potts, D Pressley, N Sanders, D Challinor, A Coultate, J Leigh and J White spoke to the motion.

C Tindle placed his thanks on record to all Councillor and officers who had setup support events.

A recorded vote was requested by in excess of the required seven Members.

For: Councillors J P Bowker, H M Brand, R B Carrington-Wilde, M M Carroll, D Challinor, M R Charlesworth, L A Dixon, J Evans, S Fielding, D J Henderson, J A Leigh, D J Merryweather, F Merryweather, J W Naish, D G Pidwell, J Potts, D R Pressley, D E Pulk, M Richardson, L Sanders, N J Sanders, J M Sanger MBE, B L Schuller, S E Shaw, J G Slater, C Tindle, C Troop and J White.

Against: None.

Abstained: Councillors D C Bamford, A K Coultate, G Dinsdale, E M Griffin, L A Stanniland.

Resolved that the motion be supported.

Proposed by Councillor D. Pulk and seconded by Councillor R B Carrington-Wilde in the absence of Councillor C Adams:

“This Council notes that UK100 is a network of local leaders who have pledged to lead a rapid transition to Net Zero with Clean Air in their communities ahead of the government’s legal target.

To accelerate action, UK100 believes in bringing together influential leaders across the country to learn together and agree on priorities for legislative and regulatory change while empowering them to engage with national decision-makers. It provides a network with the knowledge, tools and connections to make this happen.

This Council resolves to approach UK100 about becoming a member and, in doing so, agrees to the UK100 Net Zero Pledge (noted below). It also resolves as part of this Pledge to meet Net Zero council operations by 2030; to meet Net Zero areawide emissions by 2045; to report carbon emissions annually for council emissions and areawide emissions; and to limit the use of offsets, and if used, for these to be as local as possible.

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For noting:

What is the UK100 Net Zero Pledge?

As local leaders across the UK, we recognise our responsibility to tackle the climate emergency and take bold action towards Net Zero.

We will continue to lead the UK’s response to climate change, acting sooner than the government’s goal by making substantial progress within the next decade to deliver Net Zero.

We will use our experience and achievements to advocate to the UK government in order to accelerate the delivery of ambitious local climate action. With greater powers and funding, we would go further.

We commit to do everything within our power and influence to rapidly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and work with our residents and businesses to bring our wider communities’ emissions in line with Net Zero as soon as possible.

We pledge to understand our impact on climate change, prioritise where action needs to be taken and monitor progress towards our goals. We will reduce our emissions at source and limit the use of carbon offsets as part of the global effort to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

We are closer to the people who live and work in our communities, so we have a better understanding of their needs. This means we can collaborate with them to build consensus for the solutions we need to transition to a Net Zero society that delivers multiple benefits and is fair, just and works for everyone.”

Councillors D Pulk and R B Carrington-Wilde spoke to the motion.

A recorded vote was requested by in excess of the required seven Members.

For: Councillors D C Bamford, J P Bowker, H M Brand, R B Carrington-Wilde, M M Carroll, D Challinor, M R Charlesworth, A K Coultate, G Dinsdale, L A Dixon, J Evans, S Fielding, E M Griffin, D J Henderson, J A Leigh, D J Merryweather, F Merryweather, J W Naish, D G Pidwell, J Potts, D R Pressley, D E Pulk, M Richardson, L Sanders, N J Sanders, J M Sanger MBE, B L Schuller, S E Shaw, J G Slater, L A Stanniland, C Tindle, C Troop and J White.

Against: None.

Abstained: None.

Resolved that the motion be supported.

Resolved that the motion be supported.

Proposed by Councillor H. Digby and seconded by Councillor S. Fielding:

“This Council notes that there are currently estimated to be over a million people within the UK who have Alzheimer’s or dementia, with these conditions being the number one cause of death amongst women last year in 2022, as well as for the last 10 years.

With such a prevalent and serious condition, as Councillors, we have a responsibility to the residents of Bassetlaw to ensure that this Council can meet the needs of those suffering from these awful conditions.

As such, this Council resolves to:

1. Register with the Alzheimer’s Society’s Dementia Friends Initiative.
2. Offer dementia and Alzheimer’s training to employees and councillors.
3. Promote dementia-friendly signage across all Council buildings as well as to ensure compliance with the Alzheimer’s Society Dementia-friendly environment checklist, in so much as is practically possible.
4. Work with local businesses and organisations to support broader adoption of this policy.”

The motion was not considered as Councillor H Digby, the proposer, was absent from the meeting.

The Chairman advised the motion would be presented to the next meeting.

Proposed by Councillor J. Naish and seconded by Councillor J. Slater:

(The Chairman noted the title of Kevin Hollinrake in the published motion should read Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Business and Trade and, as a result, he does not use the title Right Honourable.)

“This Council notes that the existing contract between the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) and the Post Offices is nearing its end in March 2024. DVLA services enable customers to pay vehicle tax, renew driving licenses and apply for international driving permits via the Post Office.

Not renewing this contract will have a significant impact on Post Offices across the country. It will remove a vital revenue stream for organisations which, especially in rural communities, act as important social and community spaces. It will also preclude hundreds of thousands of people who aren't online from accessing driving-related services which are essential for facilitating daily living and maintaining independence.

As a Council, we resolve to forward a letter to Kevin Hollinrake, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Business and Trade, to highlight our concerns and call for rapid intervention to ensure that DVLA services continue to be offered in communities across the UK.”

Councillors L Schuller, J Slater and J Naish spoke to the motion.

Resolved that the motion be supported.

Proposed by Councillor L Schuller and seconded by Councillor N Sanders in the absence of Councillor A Rhodes:

“As a Council, we have signed a Tobacco Control Declaration containing four key priorities:

1. Supporting people to stop smoking;
2. Preventing uptake of smoking;
3. Reducing harm from tobacco;
4. Underpinned by effective regulation and communication.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) advises that “the option of either a combination of short- and long-acting nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) or nicotine containing e-cigarettes are more likely to result in people successfully stopping smoking”.

While it is true that e-cigarettes or vapes can be a tool to reduce nicotine intake, there is a growing body of evidence which suggests that they may still cause significant harm, especially when used by young people. While it is illegal for vapes containing tobacco to be sold to under 18s, a loophole exists which allows for the distribution of free samples to anybody.

This Council, therefore, resolves to raise its concerns about the accessibility of e-cigarettes and vapes to young people, and to actively work with partners to reduce this access.

Specifically, it will:

1. Write to the Secretary of State for Health and the Secretary of State for Business and Trade to ask them to close any loopholes which allow the legal distribution of e-cigarettes and vapes to under 18s.
2. Write to the Health Minister to request a reduction in or cessation of targeted advertising by e-cigarette and vape producers.
3. Write a letter to our Member of Parliament to request that the concerns of Bassetlaw councillors and residents are raised in Parliament.
4. Work with local partners to raise awareness of the potential risks of e-cigarettes and vapes to young people's health.
5. Work with Trading Standards to flag businesses which are believed to facilitate the use of e-cigarettes and vapes by under-aged people.”

The Chairman proposed a slight amendment to point 3 which was seconded by Councillor N Sanders:

3. Write **letters** to **both** our **Members** of Parliament to request that the concerns of Bassetlaw councillors and residents are raised in Parliament.

A vote was taken on accepting the proposed amendment:

Resolved that the amendment be supported.

Councillors D Challinor, S Shaw, J Potts, D Pidwell and N Sanders spoke to the motion.

Resolved that the amended motion be supported.

(Councillor L Schuller left the meeting)

42 Referrals

42a Cabinet - 11th July 2023 - Minute No. 27(a) - S80 Partnership Ltd - Request for further funding (Key Decision No. 999)

Members were provided an update on the current position of S80 Partnership Ltd and proposals for the future development of the company.

The report sought additional funding to finance the development of the company by way of a loan to be repaid to the Council within 5 years.

In response to Councillor Bamford's earlier question, Councillor J Evans, Cabinet Member for Corporate Strategy, noted she had met with Councillor Bamford and senior finance officers to discuss this matter, and it was explained that it would be very difficult at this stage to provide an accurate forecast over the next 5 years.

"The main reason for this is that there are various ideas for trading opportunities, in addition to the expansion of the existing S80 services such as CCTV, and each will have different income, expenditure and profit margins. Yes, we need to maximise our current commercial boundaries, but we also need to explore new business opportunities and spend time exploring these links. To do this properly, we need greater capacity which S80 hasn't had previously. Identified opportunities will then be developed into detailed Business Cases with profit and loss projections and presented to the S80 Board for approval. Until we are in this position, producing any meaningful figures would be purely speculative.

Members have been provided with indicative figures of the net cash needed to repay the loan, and to cover the costs of the proposed staff members. These will be reviewed and included in future forecasts. The Council, as shareholder, will be entitled to scrutinise these figures in due course. I can assure members that detailed profit and loss statements will be produced at the appropriate point.

As has been discussed when meeting on S80, there is always a risk when investing; we all know that. We acknowledge that S80 will need to grow quickly to get to the stage where it can meet the projected ongoing costs, and this may require the organisation to be trading up to £3m per year if the selected trading routes have low profit margins. This turnover figure would be much lower for a high profit margin enterprise.

Either way, I should remind everyone that this Council is in a healthy financial position - unlike some councils – and S80 already has £100k put aside for the future development of the company from profits generated. It is important that Members understand that the proposed loan from the Council is in fact ‘seed funding’ or a loan facility - to be used, if needed, to support the growth of S80. We hope that it won’t need all this money.

Fundamentally, as I have pointed out to Council on numerous occasions:

This Council needs to be prepared for the future agenda and opportunities that the STEP fusion energy project will present, a multi-billion-pound investment that Bassetlaw has never seen before and may never see again. Therefore, as a Council, we need to have the right capability with the right people in place to move quickly – that is, IF we want to maximise this organisation’s opportunities and strengthen its financial resilience.

I have also warned Members in the past that the biggest challenge for this Council is recognising the need for change... appointing to S80 posts will be just one of a number of structural changes that we need to make, if we want to be a proactive and productive council that makes the most of this one-off opportunity. We want to be fleet of foot and it is our conclusion that having an active, fully-staffed trading company is the best way of achieving this and being in a position to deliver core aspects of Vision 2040.”

Resolved that Members approve that the Council provide a loan facility to S80 Partnership Ltd of £200,000 to be repaid within 5 years.

42b Audit & Risk Scrutiny Committee - 20th July 2023 - Minute No. 16(a) - Constitution Review

The report updated Members on progress of the Constitution review and to sought approval of the proposed amendments to Part 3 of the Constitution.

Resolved that the proposed amendments to Parts 4 and 5 of the Constitution and the increase of the threshold for a key decision be approved.

42c Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 25th July 2023 - Minute No. 29(b) - Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23

Members were presented with the Overview and Scrutiny Draft Annual for approval.

Resolved that the Overview and Scrutiny Draft Annual Report be approved.

43 Report(s) of the Chief Executive

43a Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Key Decision No. 988)

Members were presented with a report which proposed a full Interim Polling Places Review commencing on 29th September 2023.

The report also sought Council’s approval for the establishment of an all-party Member Working Group to undertake the review and make final recommendations to Council.

Resolved that:

1. The commencement of a full Review of Polling Places within the District of Bassetlaw be approved.
2. The review be undertaken by an all-party Member Working Group on a 3:1:1 basis.
3. The following Members be appointed to the Member Working Group:
 - Councillor Jo White

- Councillor Neil Sanders
 - Councillor Lynne Schuller
 - Councillor Lewis Stanniland
 - Councillor Joan Sanger
4. The timetable for the Review as set out in the report be approved.
 5. The Terms of Reference of the Review Working Group as set out in Appendix 'A' be approved.

43b Electoral Review (Key Decision No. 1005)

Members were provided with an update on the upcoming Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) review of Bassetlaw.

The report sought Council approval for the establishment a cross-party Member Working Group to make recommendations on a Council submission to the Commission.

Resolved that:

1. That Council notes the outline of the Electoral Review process and the role of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in undertaking the review.
2. That the preparation of proposals for the Council's submission to the Commission be undertaken by a cross-party Working Member Group on a 3.1.1 basis, and the proposals be submitted to Council in December 2023.
3. The Terms of Reference (Appendix B) for the Electoral Review Working Group be approved.
4. The following Members be appointed to the Working Group: Councillors A. Rhodes (Chair), Councillors H. Brand, D.Henderson, F. McFarland and J.Naish.

43c Vision 2040 and new Council Plan (Key Decision No. 1004)

Members were presented with a report which sought to approve the key aspirations set out in the Council's Vision 2040 and the draft Council Plan for 2023 to 2027 following consultation feedback.

Resolved that:

1. The proposals contained within Vision 2040 be approved.
2. Council approves the priorities or Council Plan Actions contained within the document, becoming the new Corporate Plan for 2023 – 2027.
3. That progress against the Council Plan Actions is reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis in line with the Council's recently refreshed performance management framework.

44 Report(s) of the Monitoring Officer

44a Constitution Review

Members were presented with a report which sought approval for amendments to Part 4 of the Constitution (Scheme of delegation to Officers) following the creation of one new Head of Service post (Head of Growth and Economic Prosperity) and the re-designation of another Head of Service (Head of Regeneration post becomes Head of post (to confirm the respective delegations to the Head of Planning and Place).

Resolved that Council approves the proposed amendments to Part 4 of the Constitution and the delegations to the Head of Growth and Economic Prosperity and the Head of Planning and Place.

45 Any other business which the Chairman considers to be urgent

As there was no other urgent business, the Chairman closed the meeting.

(Meeting closed at 8.26 pm.)