

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Meeting: Thursday, 9 May 2024 at 7.15 pm in The Arts Centre, Pavilion Gardens, Buxton

Present: Councillor P Inman (Chair)

Councillors R Baker, A Barrow, P Bell, A Benham, J Benzer, N Clarke, J Collins, G Cross, O Cross, S De Pee, D Elliott-Starkey, S Evans, C Farrell, S Gardner, N Gourlay, D Greenhalgh, L Grooby, P Hacking, M Hall, A Hopkinson, I Huddleston, K Kirkham, D Lomax, P Mackie, A McKeown, R McKeown, C Morton, C Payne, R Quinn, P Reddy, P Roberts, G Scott, E Siddall, K Sizeland, F Sloman, J Taylor, M Taylor and J Todd

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Capper, G Claff, P Hardy and B Hastings-Asatourian

24/47 TO RECEIVE DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST ON ANY MATTER BEFORE THE COUNCIL
(Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations made.

24/48 MR RAY DAVIES
(Agenda Item)

The Council observed a minute's silence in memory of Mr Ray Davies, a Freeman of the Council, who had recently passed away.

24/49 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
(Agenda Item 3)

It was moved by Councillor Anthony McKeown and seconded by Councillor Greenhalgh that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 21 February 2024 be approved as a correct record.

The motion was carried and the Mayor was authorised to sign the minutes.

24/50 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
(Agenda Item 4)

The Mayor thanked the civic team and councillors gave their best wishes to Mrs Fawkes on her retirement.

24/51 QUESTIONS OF WHICH NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

(Agenda Item 5)

1. Question received from Carole Hallam:

“Is the cross service working group now in a position to enable vacant properties to count as 'potential supply' towards future requirements, and publish in the next Local Plan or Borough Plan (2023-2027) an estimate of the number of unoccupied and substantially unfurnished properties which can realistically be brought back into use to help count towards future requirements, continue to help meet local housing need, and help continue a pathway towards a reduced carbon footprint in the next Local Plan?”

Response from the Leader:

“In certain circumstances Councils can consider the number of vacant properties within their area as a potential source of future supply that can be counted towards future housing requirements. This can be done where both of two main criteria exist, namely;

1. There is an excessive level of vacant properties within the area
2. There is a programme / funding in place to bring such properties back into residential use.

A vacancy rate of around 3% is considered normal (indeed essential) to allow the housing market to function, with a proportion of properties being empty at any given time whilst

1. being marketed for sale,
2. being refurbished between tenancies or other occupation, or
3. being caught in probate following the death of the previous owner.

Vacancies tend to be lowest in the social rented sector as professional social landlords both want and are able to quickly turn round properties between tenancies.

The Housing and Employment Land Needs Assessment 2022 (HELNA) considered this issue.

https://www.highpeak.gov.uk/media/7530/High-Peak-HELNA-ISSUE-12.09.22/pdf/61492_High_Peak_HELNA_ISSUE_120922.PDF?m=1663773285323

Para 8.56~ pg 113. Shows that there were 617 long term vacant properties in the borough at October 2020, representing around 1.4%, with overall vacancies representing about 3.2% of stock. These figures being consistent with the long term trends observed from 2004.

This is within the normal (required) range and effectively precludes counting returning vacant units into residential use as a quantifiable element of future supply.

This will of course be kept under review.”

In response to a supplementary question the Leader of the Council stated that the Council's Empty Properties Officer and Working Group would be addressing hot spots in the Borough. The Council also introduced an Empty Property Premium in February to reduce the number of empty properties.

2. Question received from Halina Billingham on behalf of Save Roughfields:

"Why, in 2014, having excluded Roughfields from the preferred options, did HPBC belatedly decide to include it, despite the fact that the appraisal report had identified 30 other sites for 1100 additional dwellings, all of which scored more favourably than Roughfields? "

Response from the Leader:

"Roughfields has been identified as a potential development site from the 1950s onwards and was recognised as such in the initial Site Options consultation in 2012.

Following that consultation, it was not taken forward into the February 2013 Preferred Options Local Plan consultation as, at the time, the Council could identify sufficient housing sites elsewhere across the Borough.

However, in order to create a local plan that would be compliant and meet the requirements to be approved at Public Examination by the Government Independent Planning Inspector, it was resolved that the annual requirement for housing would need to be increased from 270 homes per year (as set out in the Local Plan preferred options) to 360 homes per year and that the plan period would need to be extended to 2031 from 2028 to ensure that the plan ran for at least 15 years from adoption as required by the National Planning Policy Framework.

This meant the Council needed to undertake an additional site options consultation conducted in December 2013. This proposed that Roughfields be included in the Local Plan. The site was reconsidered for allocation alongside several others across Glossopdale and the rest of the High Peak. The site was subsequently included in the Local Plan Submission Version, published for formal representations in April 2014.

The Draft Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (February 2013) included summary appraisals for over 30 sites in the Glossopdale area. The SA scores ranged from 20 to 43, with the Roughfields site scoring 27. Many other factors are taken into account during the preparation of the Local Plan. The Local Plan was informed by extensive evidence gathering, consultation, and finally close scrutiny at an examination in public by a Government-appointed independent planning inspector who ultimately deemed the Local Plan to meet the appropriate requirements and be taken forward for adoption. Concerning the site in question, the Inspector concluded that it was justified and viable and that landscaping and infrastructure matters could be satisfactorily addressed.

The Council then agreed to adopt the Local Plan, which included the Roughfields site in April 2016."

In response to a supplementary question the Leader of the Council stated that further information with regards to sites that scored over 27 and not included in the local Plan would be issued after the meeting.

3. Question received from Councillor Fiona Sloman to the Leader:

Would the leader of the council ask for an explanation of the 17.5 million unallocated monies for special school places from the leader of the DCC. It appears that 91% of the budget has not been used for parents of special needs children, who are in dire need of support .

Furthermore it appears that one third of EHCP's (education, health and care plans) have not been completed within 20 weeks as required by statute . This situation appears to be reprehensible and coupled with other swingeing cuts (day centres ,care homes) points to DCC lack of humanity towards their residents .

Response from the Leader:

"I share, as I'm sure with other members of the Council, the concern that funding made available to support children and families in our area with special educational needs has not yet been allocated.

Connect, a local SEN campaign group based in Glossop, has highlighted the need for local facilities, advising that "Parents come to us distressed because their children aren't getting the right support in mainstream schools, and the only option some of these families are faced with is sending their children to schools like Alderwasley Hall in Belper which is over an hour away."

Whilst I understand from a recent media response from the County Council that work is underway to get this capital funding allocated and spent, you can't help but wonder if this highlights the impact of Government cuts to Councils' revenue budgets over the last 14 years and what effect this has had to staff at local Council's that need to put these schemes together.

I'm happy to raise the concerns as requested."

In response to a supplementary question The Leader of the Council stated that the decision of the County would be subject to call-in and that the Borough Council would be involved in the consultation process.

24/52

REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION

(Agenda Item 6)

It was moved by Councillor Taylor and seconded by Councillor Bell:

1. That the revised Article 5, Council and Committee Meeting Procedure Rules, Protocol for Honorary Freeman and Aldermen be approved.

2. That the Executive Procedure Rules and delegations to officers be considered by the Audit and Regulatory Committee/Executive as appropriate for approval.

When put to the meeting it was RESOLVED accordingly.

24/53 LEADER OF THE COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Agenda Item 7)

The Leader referred to the following areas of work:

- The Individual Executive Decision that approved the purchase of a copy of the Hayfield Kinder Pledge to formally support the initiative of the Hayfield Kinder Trespass Group.
- The Executive at its meeting on 18 April 2024 adopted a Nature Recovery Declaration, subject to further consideration by the Council's Climate Change Working Group and any plain English amendments.
- Work was underway to agree the Investment Plan that required to be submitted to secure the £5m LUF3 funding that was awarded to the Council in the Spring Budget.
- A meeting had taken place with Derbyshire County Council with regards to the future of Buxton Museum.
- The Council has received information with regards to a new inspection regime for funeral directors which was a unregulated sector at present.

24/54 DERBY AND DERBYSHIRE STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP BOARD (FOR INFORMATION)

(Agenda Item 8)

The report was approved by the Executive on 18 April 2024 and presented to Council for information. The purpose of the report was to provide an update on work taking place with Derby and Derbyshire councils on a revised approach to collaborative and partnership working and to seek approval from the Executive to participate in a new Joint Committee of Derby and Derbyshire's councils – the Derby and Derbyshire Strategic Leadership Board. The report also set out how this would link into the new East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) arrangements.

24/55 ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT

(Agenda Item 9)

The Council's Constitution requires Select Committees to report annually on their work. The report provided an update on the implementation of the recommendations from the review of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny arrangements undertaken by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny in 2020.

Councillors referred to the improved quality of scrutiny including the work of the Programming Group, training opportunities and use of the PAPER methodology used to prioritise work programmes.

It was moved by Councillor A. McKeown and seconded by Councillor Greenhalgh that the report be noted.

When put to the meeting it was RESOLVED accordingly.

24/56 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2024/25

(Agenda Item 10)

It was moved by Councillor A. McKeown and seconded by Councillor Greenhalgh that the Schedule of Meetings 2024 – 2025 be approved

When put to the meeting it was RESOLVED accordingly.

The meeting concluded at 8.22 pm

MAYOR