

BROXTOWE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

13 DECEMBER 2017

Councillor H G Khaled MBE, Mayor

Councillors:	E H Atherton	E Kerry
	D Bagshaw	S Kerry
	S A Bagshaw	P Lally
	L A Ball BEM	J W Longdon
	J S Briggs	G Marshall
	M Brown	R D MacRae
	D A Burnett	J K Marsters
	B C Carr	J W McGrath
	S J Carr	J M Owen
	M J Crow	P J Owen
	E Cubley	J C Patrick
	R H Darby	M E Plackett
	J A Doddy	M Radulovic MBE
	S Easom	C H Rice
	D A Elliott	R S Robinson
	J C Goold	P D Simpson
	A Harper	A W G A Stockwell
	R I Jackson	

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J W Handley, M Handley, G Harvey, L A Lally and K E Rigby.

53. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

54. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2017 were confirmed and signed subject to the amendment that minute number 44 stated that Councillor R S Robinson represented Cossall and Kimberley, he in fact represents Kimberley.

55. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor gave a résumé of her engagements since the last Council meeting, which included her attendance at numerous engagements and a variety of fundraising events.

56. YOUTH MAYOR'S REPORT ON BROXTOWE YOUTH VOICE ACTIVITIES

The new Youth Mayor, Alfie Russell, introduced himself to Council members and stated that the previous Youth Mayor had been working alongside the Police and Crime Commissioner in order to educate young people about topics such as their rights during stop and search. The Member of the Youth Parliament for this constituency visited the House of Commons, as all the members of Youth Parliament had come together to debate the main issues that affect young people in their local area from all over the United Kingdom. The new Deputy Youth Mayor, Will Mee, also introduced himself to Council members.

57. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

No petitions were presented.

58. LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader presented his report and expressed his condolences to the families and friends of a pupil from Chilwell School who had died following an accident. Councillor Marshall, a Governor at Chilwell School, was asked to convey councillors' sympathies to the pupils and wider school family.

The Council's successes and achievements in 2017 were recognised. In Housing these included new grant schemes being introduced, which enabled grants of up to £10,000 to assist people to leave hospital to suitable accommodation and further grants up to £10,000 to assist those who needed to move house because of physical disability and grants to help people diagnosed with dementia to make adaptations to their homes.

In the Environment department, further improvement schemes for parks were delivered and only two parks did not currently meet the parks standard. Improvements have been delivered at Brinsley Headstocks, Hall Om Wong, Toton Fields, Judson Avenue open space and Smithurst Road, Giltbrook, linked to the construction of 91 houses at Smithurst Road.

Additional free car parking had been provided throughout the Borough. In addition to free parking after 4 pm and free parking on Saturdays throughout the Borough. Free Wi-Fi for Stapleford town centre had been delivered to attract people into the town centre.

The Council's leisure company, Liberty Leisure Ltd, had a profitable first year, exceeding their financial targets and gyms at Bramcote, Chillwell and Kimberley were newly equipped with the latest fitness equipment. Bramcote Leisure Centre was shortlisted for the APSE best performer awards and Chilwell Leisure Centre for the most improved. During a year of change it was creditable that leisure services in the Borough continued to improve.

In Community safety, twelve of the Council's car parks were awarded 'Park Mark' status, which means they meet the requirements of a risk assessment undertaken by the police. Public space protection orders in Eastwood, Stapleford, Beeston North, Toton and Kimberley were introduced to control consumption of alcohol in public spaces and reduce anti-social behaviour and at Chilwell Retail Park to combat car cruising. The Council's neighbourhood wardens were awarded silver accreditation in this year's Community Animal Welfare Awards and received an RSPCA innovator award for the stray dog service.

A number of new strategies had been approved, including a new Commercial Strategy, Playing Pitch Strategy, ICT Strategy and Homelessness Strategy. Furthermore, important new policies included an Enforcement Policy, Gas and Electrical Safety Policies and numerous HR policies.

There were still many challenges ahead, not least the on-going funding reductions but there was confidence that the Council was in a good position to continue to deliver the excellent services that residents expected.

59. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Vice-Chairman of Brinsley Vision, Ms J Robinson, directed a question to the Chair of the Jobs and Economy Committee, which stated:

"We note the detailed analysis of the Stage 2 Local Plan consultation which will be considered by the Jobs and Economy Committee tomorrow evening. Our question is for the Chairman of that committee, which previously decided that the site for Brinsley is Broxtowe's preferred site on Church Lane. I will first give the background to our question.

Together with many Brinsley residents, this group are in agreement with the Stage 2 Plan, Policy 5.1 and we are concerned that yet again, Brinsley Parish Council and the Steering Group do not want to accept the results of a formal consultation. Residents of Brinsley have continually been denied access to honest, transparent information relating to the Church Lane, Brinsley site, which is now included in the Plan as Policy 5.1.

That situation continues to this day. Residents have potentially made decisions based on biased and inaccurate information from the Steering Group, and scaremongering that the site in Policy 5.1 will result in building next to the Headstocks. That is the common but incorrect understanding of many residents. The response of Brinsley Parish Council to the Stage 2 consultation includes several inaccuracies and unjustified comments.

Additionally there has been targeted lobbying by the Brinsley Steering Group of members of this and other councils. We would like Broxtowe planners to make known to Brinsley residents, the factual position regarding the site through public display and attendance of the officers.

We are very concerned that, following two public consultations by Broxtowe Borough Council costing thousands of pounds of ratepayers' money and untold amounts of officer time, it seems from the agenda for tomorrow that Brinsley Parish Council are going to get yet another opportunity to promote the Cordy Lane site.

It should be noted that the Cordy Lane site is subject to flooding, is still affected by sewage and coal workings, is close to wildlife sites and would cause merging with the settlement of Underwood. Its connections with DH Lawrence heritage are arguably more than is widely known or accepted, it has abundant wildlife, and evidence of mining and World War 2 heritage. None of these factors have been considered by Brinsley Parish Council. Investigations may determine it is undeliverable.

The Cordy Lane site was chosen by the Steering Group and council following a severely flawed local consultation on 3 December 2016. Since then two Broxtowe consultations have chosen the Church Lane site. We fail to understand why consideration is being given to allowing Brinsley Parish Council another opportunity to influence the Stage 2 Plan.

Our question is, will the Committee please take into account the information I have just given, accept and confirm the site in Policy 5.1, and consider the positive suggestions put forward by this group regarding other policies?"

In response, the Chair of the Jobs and Economy Committee stated that Brinsley Vision had responded to the recent Local Plan publication and the comments raised, including the positive suggestions put forward, would be taken into account. It was too early to say whether the site choice in Brinsley would be confirmed. Planning Officers were busy assessing the merits of comments that had been raised, liaising with Infrastructure providers including Nottinghamshire County Council, and also reviewing the information in terms of housing land supply. Consequently the Jobs and Economy Committee would have the most up to date information when considering potential changes to the plan in the New Year. It was stated that it should not be assumed that changes were likely or indeed unlikely to be made, as consideration of this had to be informed by the up to date evidence relating to the whole Borough and in particular in relation to housing land supply.

60. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

60.1 The following question had been submitted by Councillor S A Bagshaw for the Chair of the Housing Committee:

"Would the Chair of the Housing Committee give a brief outline to the government's proposed Homelessness Reduction Act? Will he outline what impact this will have on Broxtowe and, in particular, Eastwood's homeless young people?"

The Chair of the Housing Committee responded that homelessness and its causes were complex and so a brief outline of this Act would not suffice. In

summary, following cross party support in Parliament, the Homelessness Reduction Act was given Royal Assent on 27 April 2017. Along with its implications, the Act was discussed at length at the 5 July 2017 Housing Committee meeting. The 20 September Committee approved the South Notts Homelessness Strategy, which included a section on the Act. The work programme also included further reports, with an update at the next meeting due on 17 January 2018.

Putting this in context, councils had been given a year to consider, inform and implement the changes, details of which would be given in statutory guidance. This Council contributed to the government consultation which closed on 11 December 2017 and the final guidance was awaited.

The Act consisted of 13 clauses. It introduced requirements for local housing authorities to undertake homelessness prevention work with all those who were eligible for help and threatened with homelessness. The Act changed the point at which a person was classed as being threatened with homelessness, from 28 days before a person's likely homeless date to 56 days, therefore doubling the help period. This meant that the local authority was able to intervene at a much earlier stage and ensured that this prevention work became a statutory requirement.

The Act also required local housing authorities to undertake a detailed assessment of the applicant's needs, and required that the steps agreed between the authority and the applicant were set out in writing in the form of a personalised plan. This personalised plan ensured that all applicants received good quality advice, which was individual to their personal circumstances and clearly set out the steps that would be taken to either prevent or relieve the applicant's homelessness. This would be particularly useful for other agencies involved with the applicant and provided greater transparency with regard to the advice and assistance being given by the Council.

Broxtowe's Homelessness Team had been focused on homelessness prevention work for many years and had been recognised as a beacon authority. The introduction of the Act would not significantly impact on the ability of the team to continue to deliver exemplary services. It was understood that there was a need to provide earlier, more detailed and written personalised action plans, which was a positive step.

In preparation for the provisions which would come into law on 2 April 2018, work had already been completed and more was progressing according to plan.

Funding was a positive picture. Broxtowe Borough Council receives the following external funding to help support its work to tackle homelessness: Homeless Prevention Grant received as a specific amount in the Council's Revenue Support Grant, The Government Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (which replaces the Temporary Accommodation Management Fund), additional two year transitional funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government to help with the additional responsibilities under the Act, the Council's Discretionary Housing Payment

Fund, and funding from Council Tax and general funding from the Council's Revenue Support Grant allocation from Central Government.

Regarding performance, the latest homelessness statistics from the South Nottinghamshire Inter-agency Forum showed that homeless decisions and acceptances had remained fairly consistent. The range of options to prevent homelessness was reduced with the limited availability of supported accommodation in general. There had also been a positive reduction in the use of temporary accommodation.

The Council provides equally excellent homelessness services for residents in Eastwood and all wards in the Borough. There was awareness of reports of rough sleeping in Eastwood. The Council had been in contact with two individuals and provided advice and assistance in accordance with its statutory obligations. It had been said that young people did not know where to go for help, therefore they would be signposted to receive the help they needed, with prevention being the key.

The Council had a responsibility to all rough sleepers within the Borough. During periods of severe weather, the DCLG advises that Severe Weather Emergency Protocols should be activated when a weather forecast predicted three consecutive nights, or more, of a temperature of zero degrees celsius or lower. Under this protocol, temporary accommodation would be booked for any rough sleeper believed to be at risk of severe cold weather.

In non-severe weather, rough sleepers had to be assessed in accordance with the Housing Act 1996 Part 7. If they were deemed to be eligible, in priority need and unintentionally homeless, then the Council had a duty to provide them with emergency accommodation. However, if they were deemed to be not in priority need or were intentionally homeless then the duty was to provide advice and assistance only. Practically, this was in the form of negotiating with friends or relatives to provide short-term accommodation, referrals into supported housing projects (such as Elizabeth House, Canaan Trust and the YMCA) or utilising the Deposit Guarantee Scheme to secure a private sector tenancy.

A supplementary question was submitted by Councillor Bagshaw which stated that individuals that were sleeping rough in Eastwood felt invisible.

The Chair of the Housing Committee stated that not all individuals engaged with the Team in the best way and should be further encouraged to maintain a dialogue. There had been improvements in the Council to engage at an earlier stage in addition to working with the relevant partners.

60.2 The following question had been submitted by Councillor D Bagshaw for Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee:

“Throughout the year I have asked on numerous occasions and stated my concern at the continuing decline in this Council's ability to collect its rent. I note from the latest Finance and Resources Committee this collection rate has now fallen to 95% which takes us out of the upper quartile of collection

rates of councils throughout the country. Does the Chair agree with me this collection rate is now a major concern and what new initiatives is he considering introducing to raise the collection rates to a much more reasonable level and explain to Council the reasons for this continuing fall in collection rates?"

The Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee stated that this was a problem that had been over three years in the making and that it would not be solved quickly. Furthermore, the new initiatives being put in place would take 12 to 18 months before any improvements were seen in the position.

Nationally, rent arrears had been increasing as a result of several factors outside this Council's control. The main reasons have been the changes introduced through Welfare Reform, including the Under Occupancy Charge, the benefit cap and the introduction of Universal Credit.

The latest available Housemark benchmark data for 16/17 showed that Broxtowe Borough Council was in the second quartile.

The Council had implemented a number of different initiatives aimed at reducing rent arrears. Consultation was taking place on further measures, including payment by Direct Debit, Rent in Advance and a revised tenancy agreement. The next Housing Committee would consider these measures.

The new approaches had seen a positive impact on rent arrears, including a steady reduction in arrears over the last four months. The arrears were now 18% down from its highest position in August 2017.

The improvement was not yet fully reflected in the performance statistics, but it would be reflected at the end of quarter 3, which was a notoriously difficult period to predict with the added pressure of the Christmas period. This issue would be carefully monitored and a fuller report on the position would be submitted to the Finance and Resources Committee in February 2018.

A supplementary question was submitted by Councillor Bagshaw which queried whether the closure of cash offices affected elderly people who could not use other methods of payment.

The Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee stated that there was no knowledge of any person being unable to pay rents due to the closure of cash offices.

60.3 The following question had been submitted by Councillor R H Darby to the Chair of the Jobs and Economy Committee:

"As a member for Stapleford, I am deeply concerned at the decline of shops and business in Stapleford. What new initiatives is he proposing to arrest this decline and help revitalise the town centre?"

The Chair of the Jobs and Economy Committee responded that Stapleford's occupancy rate had been at 85-86% throughout the year.

There were several properties that had become vacant that had required improvements or been marketed. The Council's economic development team had worked with partners and progress was being made in bringing a number of units into productive use in the near future.

In terms of longer term improvements, the investment of town centre Wi-Fi had given the town a tool to market businesses and activities to regular and infrequent visitors to ensure their return. Furthermore, the ability to monitor footfall would allow the Council to better understand trends in the town and how businesses could be supported.

The Council's Part 2 Local Plan was published in September with responses due to be reported to the Jobs and Economy Committee on 14 December. There was a pro-active policy framework to secure additional investment in Stapleford by contracting the town centre boundary to focus retail development in smaller areas and secure additional residential development in upper floors. In addition, the policy around the HS2 station sought to improve connections into Stapleford in order for residents in the town to benefit from the opportunities that HS2 would bring.

60.4 The following question had been submitted by Councillor J W McGrath to the Chair of the Policy and Performance Committee:

"Would the Leader of the Council outline the proposals contained with the Master Plan for the Toton/Stapleford HS2 Station and the development of the surrounding area and would he confirm, yes or no, that in this report there were endorsements of housing numbers and this may yet lead to many more houses in the area over the long term?"

The Chair of the Policy and Performance Committee responded that the HS2 Growth Strategy was published in October 2017 and contained six character areas. These, in combination, comprised a coordinated approach to transport infrastructure, community space, green infrastructure and development opportunities within a high quality environment with the flexibility to respond to changes. The Growth Strategy did not contain any confirmed housing provision beyond the 500 homes agreed to be provided by 2028.

The Growth Strategy was not a Local Plan. It was an aspirational document to support our asks of government to secure much needed local infrastructure, and the period covered by the Growth Strategy ran until 2043 which was ten years after the HS2 station was anticipated to be open. Members would be familiar with the principle that housing provision and other development requirements were only confirmed in a Local Plan which dealt with a set period of time which, in the Broxtowe case, was to 2028.

Officers had started the process of looking at a Plan review beyond 2028 with an item on starting this off on the forthcoming Joint Planning Advisory Board. This would need to be done in cooperation with colleague councils over the Greater Nottingham area, and it was not possible for members to say what the outcome of this review would be before it commenced. However, the principle of ensuring that the maximum use was made of

previously developed sites would apply, including making the best use of the available sites such as Chetwynd Barracks which were expected to provide housing beyond 2028, which was part of the Council's approach to ensure the Green Belt be protected.

A supplementary question was submitted by Councillor McGrath which requested that all Stapleford councillors be invited to future meetings.

The Chair of the Policy and Performance Committee stated that all members were able to attend Jobs and Economy Committee meetings and it may be helpful if the residents of Stapleford followed the example of the residents around Chetwynd Barracks.

60.5 The following question had been submitted by Councillor D A Elliott to the Chair of the Policy and Performance Committee:

"There has been a noticeable attack by certain members of this Council on officers which we consider to be inappropriate and unnecessary. Does the Leader of the Council and members of his Group share my views that all officers of Broxtowe Council are worthy of praise for the job that they do on behalf of the public and, further to this, will he also place on record the thanks of this Council to those members of staff who have been involved in gritting and bin collections in the best traditions of this Council's service during these adverse weather conditions that we are now experiencing?"

The Chair of the Policy and Performance Committee responded that he agreed with the sentiment of the question that Councillors of all Political persuasions should treat officers with respect and he was happy to endorse the expression of thanks to employees involved in gritting and bin collections, and indeed to all those working in housing maintenance and those who respond to out of hours requests for service when tenants and residents experienced problems that required urgent attention.

60.6 The following question had been submitted by Councillor G Marshall to the Chair of the Policy and Performance Committee:

"I read Councillor Stockwell's Twitter comments recently which I shall now read. Does he withdraw them unreservedly and apologise for any offence caused?"

The Chair responded that as the Chair of the Policy and Performance Committee he could not speak for Councillor Stockwell, but he was happy to agree with the sentiment of the question which was that Councillors of all political persuasions should use social media responsibly. The tweet to which was referred had been deleted.

A supplementary question was submitted by Councillor Marshall which queried whether the Chair would join him in calling for all councillors to lead by example.

The Chair of the Policy and Performance Committee stated that credit should be given to Councillor Stockwell for accepting that the sentiment of

the tweet was wrong and he had apologised. It was agreed that members should lead by example.

- 60.7 The following question had been submitted by Councillor R S Robinson to the Chair of the Policy and Performance Committee:

“A twelve month struggle by a single parent in Kimberley to trade in her own town has resulted in a £200 compensation offer. Is the Leader of the Council proud of the way that leading councillors from the ruling Group have behaved towards this single parent and does he consider the compensation offered adequate?”

The Chair of the Policy and Performance Committee responded that he was not able to comment on private correspondence with a resident on personal matters without breaching the Data Protection Act. Any resident who was dissatisfied with the way a matter had been handled had the right to seek redress from the Local Government Ombudsman.

A supplementary question was submitted by Councillor Robinson which queried why the Council was denying that a meeting took place between himself and the Deputy Chief Executive.

The Chair of the Policy and Performance Committee responded by stating that the Chief Executive was referring the matter to the Monitoring Officer for review. That review would identify any lessons to be learnt, including by Councillor Robinson himself.

- 60.8 The following question had been submitted by Councillor R D MacRae to the Chair of the Policy and Performance Committee:

“Broxtowe Borough Council is a Council that represents the whole Borough yet the feeling coming out of Stapleford is Beeston gets more attention from the Council. For example, the purchase of Beeston Town Square and all the work being put into the area which was once the Multi Storey Car Park. So my question is could we please restart the Stapleford Working Group so we as a Council can work on projects to benefit the residents and businesses of Stapleford?”

The Chair of the Policy and Performance Committee responded that he did not think it was true that Stapleford received less attention than Beeston. Stapleford received free Wi-Fi in its Town Centre before any of the other towns, including Beeston. The redevelopment of Maycliffe Hall in Stapleford provided valuable new Housing and options were now being considered for the future of the Police Station site and the Cliffe Avenue site. These options would be worked up in full consultation with ward members and would be received by the appropriate committee in due course. It was likely that these developments would be progressed in parallel with the Beeston Town Centre redevelopment. The purchase of Beeston Square would bring in income that would be spent across the whole Borough, including Stapleford.

61. MEMBERS' SPEECHES ON WARD ISSUES

There were no Members' speeches on ward issues.

62. QUESTIONS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no questions on outside bodies.

63. UPDATE ON THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Councillors L A Ball BEM and J A Doddy gave an update on the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

64. NOTICE OF MOTION

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor A W G A Stockwell and seconded by Councillor P J Owen:

“This Council rejects the Metro Dynamics ‘Economic Case for the Derby-Nottingham Metro’ and notes that sufficient arrangements are in place to deliver economic growth across the area.”

Following discussion on the item a number of councillors called for a recorded vote. The voting was as follows:

<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstention</u>
E H Atherton		D Bagshaw
L A Ball BEM		S A Bagshaw
J S Briggs		T A Cullen
T P Brindley		R H Darby
M Brown		D A Elliott
D A Burnett		P Lally
B C Carr		G Marshall
S J Carr		J W McGrath
M J Crow		J C Patrick
E Cubley		R S Robinson
J A Doddy		
S Easom		
J C Goold		
A Harper		
R I Jackson		
E Kerry		
S Kerry		
H G Khaled MBE		
R D MacRae		
J K Marsters		
J M Owen		
P J Owen		
M E Plackett		

C H Rice
P D Simpson
A W G A Stockwell

The motion, on being put to the meeting, was carried.

(Councillors W J Longdon and M Radulovic MBE left the meeting before voting thereon.)

65. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

RESOLVED that Councillor S Kerry be replaced on the Governance, Audit and Standards Committee by Councillor A G W A Stockwell.

66. MEMBER APPOINTMENT PANEL

RESOLVED that five councillors, including the three group leaders or their nominees, be nominated to form an appointment committee to fill the position of Head of Housing.

67. LIBERTY LEISURE

The Mayor informed members that this item would be withdrawn from the agenda.

68. CIVIC EVENT – FREEMAN/ALDERMAN OF THE BOROUGH

Members considered a request to host a ceremony at which the status of Freeman or Alderman is conferred on those who have rendered eminent services to the Borough.

RESOLVED that the official admittance to the office of Honorary Freeman of the Borough and Honorary Alderman will take place at a special meeting of the Council to be held in November 2018.

69. RE-APPOINTMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER

Members were updated on the agreement with Nottinghamshire County Council to supply the Council's Monitoring Officer role.

RESOLVED that Nottinghamshire County Council's Monitoring Officer, Jayne Francis-Ward, be re-appointed to act as Broxtowe Borough Council's Monitoring Officer for a further period

70. COMMON SEAL

RESOLVED that the Common Seal be affixed to or the Proper Officer do sign on behalf of the Council, where appropriate, any orders, deeds or documents necessary to give effect to any resolutions of the Council or Committee.