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Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

Bill Cullen MBA (ISM), BA(Hons) MRTPI
Chief Executive

Date: 22 February 2024

To: All Members of Council

Dear Councillor,

Please see overleaf a supplementary agenda for the meeting of the **COUNCIL** on **THURSDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2024** at **6.30 pm**.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Owen'.

Rebecca Owen
Democratic Services Manager

COUNCIL - 22 FEBRUARY 2024

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

8. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S POSITION STATEMENT

Welcome to our annual budget Council which will consider a range of key reports on setting the council budget for 2024/25.

We continue to operate in significantly challenging times financially. You will all have seen some of the recent headlines about some councils who have either declared bankruptcy or are on the brink, having served S114 notices to the Government. As I said in my last statement to Council, despite repeated promises for over a decade, the Government has failed to deliver on the fair funding it promised. To illustrate the impact, Leicestershire currently sits at a position of fourth lowest in terms of core funding for 2024/25, against all 21 county councils. This Council currently sits third lowest of all 164 district councils nationally and is therefore one of the worst off councils in terms of core funding support from government measured in pounds per dwelling. In fact, we have seen an overall reduction of 60% of core funding contribution from the Government over the past 10 years.

We can debate the implications of this in our consideration of the reports on the agenda tonight.

Some other brief updates.

50 Year Anniversary

Work is progressing on celebrations for the Council's fifty year anniversary to be marked with a series of key events. Our first key event will be our Party in the Park at Hollycroft Park in May. I am pleased to report the programme schedule for this event and for commemorative events for the rest of the year is filling up fast. Look out for further updates via the council's website over the coming months.

Ratby Emergency Incident

I would like to express my thanks to all residents of Ratby and nearby Kirby Muxloe for the way they pulled together after the village was left without gas, following the burst water main only a few weeks ago. Those affected were suddenly left with no gas supply during a cold snap, with many also left with limited or no water and electricity for a short period of time.

The ordeal was triggered by a burst Severn Trent water main, with the water leaking into gas pipes overnight.

To support villagers, borough council staff worked round-the-clock with many other agencies, including Leicestershire County Council, Blaby District Council, Leicestershire Search and Rescue, Leicestershire & Rutland 4x4 Response, the Red Cross, Leicestershire Police, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue and the

Salvation Army.

Many local councillors and village volunteers also worked incredibly hard as Cadent provided a heroic effort to restore the gas supply whilst at the same time providing heaters, hot plates, heated blankets and more for all residents.

Throughout the ordeal, the teams knocked on the doors or called every home in Ratby including those of more than 500 vulnerable people to check everyone had what they needed to stay warm and safe in their homes.

A number of help centres were also set up in Ratby and Kirby Muxloe to offer support, as well as a number of 'Warm Spaces' which opened to welcome people. Sites which offered help included Ratby Library, Rooting for Ratby Volunteers and Meg-a-Glow Tan and Beauty, all providing drinks and refreshments. The Plough Inn offered a warm space, and the Railway Inn gave free hot drinks and food to those struggling. To those who helped but not named, I would like to say a big 'thank you'.

Three leisure centres also offered their shower facilities for use, while hundreds of residents looked out for people who needed extra help.

We have been hugely impressed by the community spirit shown in Ratby throughout this ordeal. Despite the cold snap, everyone including villagers, local eateries, shops and many agencies across Leicestershire worked through all hours to support those in need. We are pleased that the situation has now been resolved and compensation is being sorted for all those affected by the situation. A massive thank you to everyone involved.

Ukraine

Please join us to pay your respects as we hold a vigil to mark the two-year anniversary of the start of the Ukraine war. The vigil will be held on Friday 23 February at 7pm in Argents Mead.

We will gather for a two-minute silence before our Ukrainian community sing their national anthem. Join members of the Ukrainian community and various councillors who will also be attendance.

Green space volunteers

Our regular volunteer group have been assisting our teams with the coppicing at Burbage Common. Coppicing is a traditional woodland management technique that dates back to the Stone Age. It is vital to maintain a healthy woodland flora and fauna. Also a big thanks to Hinckley and Burbage Lions who planted 30 metres of hazel, field maple and hawthorn at Burbage Common earlier this month. The Lions and the team got very wet but had great fun outdoors fighting climate change.

If you are interested in joining our volunteer group, please email

Hinckley Hub • Rugby Road • Hinckley • Leicestershire • LE10 0FR

Telephone 01455 238141 • MDX No 716429 • Fax 01455 251172 • www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk

Neighbourhood Plans

I feel obliged to provide an accurate update on the position of this Council in respect of neighbourhood plans in response to recent articles from the local MP.

We currently have seven made neighbourhood plans, with another four actively progressing through the relevant stages. The council's planning policy team closely works with neighbourhood plan (NP) groups to bring plans forward and we welcome proactive NP groups seeking to bring their own plans and site allocations forward.

I welcome the stronger protection for neighbourhood plans, with a change from two years to five years which is contained in the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

I object, however, to recent comments regarding Desford being ridden roughshod over which is clearly not correct. The Desford NP now benefits from the additional protection from two years to five years. The sites coming forward with planning applications are sites that were allocated in the Desford NP by the Conservative Government's examiner. These sites were not chosen by the Desford NP Group for development initially but put in as reserve sites by the Government's examiner. The Desford NP was voted on by the parish with these site allocations included. I'm aware that local residents and NP Group were unhappy with the examiner's recommendations, but reluctantly accepted them to secure an adopted plan.

The position regarding recent decisions on development in Desford is completely irrespective of the council's five year housing land supply position or any result of delays to the Local Plan. Planning applications coming forward are in conformity with the Desford NP, not riding roughshod over it.

In considering the Ashfield Farm site appeal, the Planning Inspector stated the following in the appeal decision (paras 55 and 56) in relation to Policy H3 of the Desford Neighbourhood Plan:

'I consider that the release of the site as a Reserve Site in the DNP is justified. The proposal would therefore be in accordance with DNP Policy H3... DNP Policy H1 states that land outside the defined Settlement Boundary will be treated as open countryside, where development will be carefully controlled in line with local and national strategic planning policies. As the proposal would comply with DNP Policy H3, DNP Policy H1 would also be satisfied'.

The Inspector therefore clearly considered the principle of development of the site and concluded that, as an allocated reserve site in the Desford Neighbourhood Plan, the planning application was in accordance with this policy.

The same applies to the Hunt's Lane site, due to be considered at an inquiry in March. The Conservative Government's Planning Inspectorate has already

examined the policy issues around this and has ruled that such proposals are in compliance with Policy H3 of the Desford Neighbourhood Plan, however much this administration and local residents are unhappy about this.

For Neighbourhood Plans to carry weight in the planning process for five years, they have to meet criteria including allocating development sites to meet their need. Not all NPs in the borough have taken the opportunity to allocate sites and therefore these NPs do not come with the same level of protection that the NPPF offers. Whilst still having local and relevant policies for the NP area, these NPs cannot control or limit development without sufficient allocations.

For Desford, the NP contains allocations and reserve allocations sites. These sites are now coming forward. There has been no speculative development in Desford that is contrary to the Desford NP.

In addition to the misleading article in the local press, there have been misleading statements in the House of Commons and I will, therefore, be raising this with the House authorities as it isn't the first time such false claims have been made.

TeenTech Festival

I'm pleased to report our annual TeenTech Festival event funded by the Council was held on Thursday, 8 February 2024 at MIRA Technology Institute. The TeenTech Festival gave students and teachers from across the area the opportunity to try their hand at immersive challenges and experiments, to handle cutting edge technology and, most importantly, to spend time with engineers, technologists and scientists from a wide range of companies influencing their 21st century lives. The event was organised by partners at MIRA Technology Institute and North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College with the support of the Council.

The event hosted 193 students from local schools including six schools from the Hinckley and Bosworth area - Dorothy Goodman School, Hastings High School, Heath Lane Academy, The Hinckley School, Redmoor Academy and North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College. Kate Russell from BBC technology show Click provided the welcome and introduction for the event which was designed to interest young people in careers in science and technology with the subject of AI and innovation.

Council officers supported the running of interactive activities with the opportunity to talk to professionals from 11 different businesses including: MIRA Technology Institute, Triumph Motorcycles, Coventry University, Fluxsys, North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College, Polestar, HORIBA Mira, Wincanton, Haldex, Intrepid and Electric Revolution Skills Hub. Students became designers, developers and marketing experts, using sensors, data and cutting-edge technology to tackle real-world problems.

This is a credit to the work of our local Employment and Skills Taskforce and staff involved.

A5 Investment

I'm pleased to report that the council's Chief Executive and Honorary Alderman attended a parliamentary event in London on Tuesday headlined 'Unlocking the opportunities of East Midlands infrastructure' sponsored by East Midlands Councils. This was to put forward the case of The A5 Partnership for urgent and significant investment in the road, which is a key growth corridor and freight route and a key resilience route to the M6 and M1 when incidents occur on these motorways.

As we know congestion, safety and impact on businesses and local communities are major challenges due to the substandard nature of the A5. A priority improvement for us is the Hinckley to Tamworth stretch and in particular the Dodwells / Longshoot junction.

The A5 corridor contributes over £22bn Gross Value Added (GVA) annually to the economy of the Midlands. The importance of this corridor running through our borough cannot be underestimated. We now want to see Government deliver on its commitment published in the Network North Plan following the announcement to terminate the northern leg of HS2 to prioritise the Hinckley to Tamworth stretch.

(b) **Calculation of council tax for 2024/25 (Pages 1 - 2)**

Amended appendix due to the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Combined Fire Authority precept being reduced by £1 since publication of the agenda.

Amended APPENDIX A: Council Tax breakdown

	£	£	£
Gross Income / Expenditure	47,527,493	(65,032,814)	(17,505,321)
National Non-Domestic Rates Baseline	3,025,725		3,025,725
New Homes Bonus	493,397		493,397
Collection Fund Deficit	132,543		132,543
National Non-Domestic Rates retained above Baseline	4,351,944		4,351,944
Lower Tier Support Grant	546,179		546,179
Services Grant	18,144		18,144
Total	56,095,425	(65,032,814)	(8,937,389)
Council Tax requirement (net position)		(8,937,389)	
			Council Tax at Band D
HBBC		5,391,096	135.50
Special Expenses		770,694	19.37
Council tax for the Borough		6,161,790	154.87
Parishes		2,775,599	69.76
Total		8,937,389	224.63
Preceptors other than parishes			
Leicestershire County Council	63,723,689		1,601.58
Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Combined Fire Authority	3,248,802		81.65
The Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire	11,388,527		286.23
Council Tax All Services 2024/25	87,298,407		2,194.09
£2,194.09 represents the Average Band D Council Tax payable to cover all Borough Council, Special Expense, Parish Council, County Council, Fire and Police Services. This average represents a 4.97% increase on 2023/24			

	Total £
HBBC Budget Requirement 2024/25 Excluding Special Expenses and Parish precepts	13,959,028
LESS External Funding:	
National Non-Domestic Rates Baseline	(3,025,725)
New Homes Bonus	(493,397)
Collection Fund (Surplus)/ Deficit	(132,543)
National Non-Domestic Rates retained above baseline	(4,351,944)
Lower Tier Support Grant	(546,179)
Services Grant	(18,144)
	(8,567,932)
Funding from Council Taxpayer	5,391,096

