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Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

A Borough to be proud of

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

Date: 11 July 2017

To: **All Members of Council**

Copy to all other Members of the Council

(other recipients for information)

Dear Councillor,

Please see overleaf a Supplementary Agenda for the meeting of the **COUNCIL** on **TUESDAY, 11 JULY 2017** at **6.30 pm**.

Yours sincerely

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

Rebecca Owen
Democratic Services Officer

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

6. **QUESTIONS**

Questions received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule number 11.1:

(a) Question from Councillor Bray to the Leader of the Council

“In his recent County Council election bid, the Leader of the Council in his literature told residents that “Garden villages are being considered for future new homes away from existing settlements”. Could he inform the Council and local residents where these new homes will be located?”

Response from Councillor Hall

“The simple answer is “no”, because it is not for me to decide where these developments should be, it is for the people of this borough, but I will make sure that this Council puts in place a plan for future housing.

The current site allocations are driven by the direction of housing growth towards the extension of our existing urban areas and larger rural settlements. This will deliver our new housing requirements to 2026, but we need to provide for more new homes beyond that date.

I know that the majority of people recognise the need for building additional homes, especially affordable homes, but residents do not want to see the uncontrolled expansion of their towns and villages eating into the valuable green spaces around them. So we are working towards an alternative which can be supported by residents and delivered by developers.

We have achieved and continue to maintain a five year housing land supply, this provides us with protection against speculative development, and has been upheld through several developer appeals. We have an adopted site allocations document to fulfil the remaining requirement to 2026, with many sites already granted planning consent.

We have started the process of reviewing our Local Plan and have worked with county colleagues towards an agreed Strategic Growth Plan, which will provide evidence for our growth needs. We have undertaken some early workshops on options which have shown a wide variety of views in where homes could and should be delivered. This also highlights areas that we should protect and not build, these sites include land immediately surrounding some of our larger settlements.

Through our promotion of the need for neighbourhood development plans (NDPs), we are engaging with communities across the borough so that they can have their voice. We have provided additional funding to support communities across the borough with advice to help them to develop NDPs and have already driven a significant increase in the number of communities developing plans. These plans will give local people the opportunity to identify the growth in housing that they need, and the infrastructure growth that is needed to go with it.

Once officers bring all of these details together, there is likely to be a gap between what is required by existing communities and what is required for growth to 2036 and beyond. One option that is being considered to deliver this growth is the creation of garden villages. I personally believe this option to be of great value and if we can create more villages with an appropriate level of infrastructure we can deliver some fantastic new places to live, rather than destroying the ones that we already have.”

(b) Question from Councillor Witherford to the Executive member for Environmental Health

“I would refer to the discussion at the Council meeting on Thursday, 23 February, in regard to the charge for reported rat infestations, when budgets were discussed. We are now getting a considerable amount of sightings of rats running through and around gardens and properties in the urban area. Residents who have reported this to the council have withdrawn their enquiry when advised that they would incur a cost of £20 to take this further. They see no reason why they should pay this amount when the rats were not nesting on their property but migrating from other surrounding sites.

In the interest of public health in general and as a gesture of this council’s commitment to protecting the health and safety of its residents, I would once again ask if the Executive member of this administration with this responsibility will consider withdrawing the charge that has been imposed and cover the costs incurred for this service from an alternative budget”.

Response from Councillor Morrell

“I thank Councillor Witherford for her question and I can assure her of this council’s continued commitment to protecting the public health as a whole and the health and safety of our residents. I am concerned if residents are being affected by rodent infestation caused by other sources. However, if residents see a rat in their garden we can provide them with a pest control service for £20 or free to those in receipt of certain benefits (£20 is still a highly subsidised cost compared to those charged by private pest control contractors and represents very good value for the comprehensive treatment received) or if they can identify a local source of the infestation, for example an accumulation of domestic waste, then a service request can be raised with Environmental Health (Pollution) who will investigate under public health legislation.

I can confirm that officers have observed an increase in service requests relating to matters that could include rodent infestations (for example domestic accumulations) over the last four years. The gradual increase began prior to the introduction of charging for rat treatments and therefore cannot be attributed to the charge. There will always be natural fluctuations in rodent populations which can be caused by external factors such as the climate. It is very natural to see populations, and as a consequence numbers of service requests, fluctuate over years. As long as we are providing a treatment service for those that want to pay and an investigation service into matters relating to rat infestations I feel that we are providing adequate protection to public health.

I will continue to monitor the situation but at the current time am not minded to reintroduce a free service; something which is very rare for local authorities to provide in today’s financial climate”.

(c) Question from Councillor DS Cope to the Executive member for Cultural Services

“Could the Executive member advise why the very popular and well attended Proms in the Park does not appear to be included in the events for this year. Both my wife and myself have been approached by many past attendees who live on the estate and beyond and are disappointed to see that no mention has been made of an event this year”.

Response from Councillor Cook

“Thank you for your question regarding events, especially Proms in the Park.

I am pleased to announce that 2017 represents the busiest events programme the council has undertaken. An uplift in the core budget aligned to events has helped us to achieve this. The economic benefits are well documented, with a 25% increase in footfall which supports the economic vitality of Hinckley’s town centre. Financial support to our rural event is also being rolled out.

Unfortunately, the lead performer of Proms in the Park, John Cleveland Orchestra, has disbanded. Alternative performers were sought but were not forthcoming. This coupled with a significant drop in attendance (88% over the past few years*) provided the opportunity for the multi agency events sub group to reallocated the aligned budget to new and exciting projects. Our key delivery partners, Friends of Hollycroft Park, have a wonderful events package on offer this season.

I’m sure all members recognise and support the diverse, high quality events package and its ability to attract visitors to our town and village centres”.

** Note: In 2010, we attracted 2,400 attendees to Proms in the Park. This had dropped to just 300 last year. Poor weather has played a part, but the number has fallen year on year.*

8. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S POSITION STATEMENT

I have to begin my position statement for this meeting with a reflection on the sad loss of life at Grenfell Tower, and the recent terrorist attacks in London and Manchester. During the terrorist attacks people of all faiths and nationalities came together to support the victims and their families of a few individual attackers. These innocent victims were not all British and it is a credit to our emergency services and the local communities who came to their aid.

In Grenfell, the causes of the tragedy which led to the loss of so many lives will be debated for years to come, but in the immediate aftermath it was the community who responded fastest to the needs of victims and their families. A community who once again came together regardless of race, religion or background. This is what strong communities do, not through any direction but through a common sense of doing what is right.

For the most part our communities are law abiding and respectful of peoples’ differences, most recognise that we have more in common to bring us together than the things that divide us, and we see that as people get on with their daily lives. We see the support that our officers give day after day to our communities, officers supporting people in need and enriching lives, be that through the great work delivered by our community houses, keeping our places clean, or providing leisure activities.

When we become Councillors we hope that we can support our communities through

good times and bad, but we never expect things to get quite as bad as they have done for those communities, and we hope that they never will.

For our part this Council has been undertaking a review of our properties and our fire risk assessment. As part of that review a report will be sent to scrutiny to brief members on our current levels of fire safety. I should state that officers have already complied with information requests to central government and identified that we have no high rise and high risk properties needing any immediate action. If we do identify that we need to make changes to other properties then they will be implemented.

On our agenda this evening we will be seeking member approval to procure a new fleet of vehicles to support changes to refuse and recycling, groundcare and housing maintenance. Executive has authorised changes to the service of refuse collection, which will see an additional round included from next year. We will also modify the dry recycling system from next year so that households will not need to use the separate card and paper caddy, but will simply be able to co-mingle dry recycling in the blue lidded bin. Both of these changes will improve the collection service to our customers and address some capacity issues experienced with card and paper collection.

We also have the financial outturn report for 2016-17 and members will see the council's financial position has continued to improve and puts us in a better position to deal with any future challenges.

We also have an updated constitution for members to agree. Rebecca Owen has worked with a cross party group to simplify and update the constitution, which has received the endorsement of the Scrutiny Commission and it is now a much easier document to read, as well as one that reflects recent changes in legislation.

12. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION 2017

Amendment to constitution

The list of politically restricted posts (4h of the draft constitution) has been amended to remove section 2 (posts at or above the specified salary level) as this requirement is no longer contained in the legislation.

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