

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE

26 MARCH 2014 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr SL Bray - Chairman
Mr DC Bill MBE – Vice-Chairman
Mr DS Cope, Mr WJ Crooks, Mr KWP Lynch and Ms BM Witherford

Members in attendance: Councillors Mr PR Batty and Mr JS Moore

Officers in attendance: Steve Atkinson, Storme Coop, Bill Cullen, Edwina Grant, Simon D Jones, Sanjiv Kohli, Rebecca Owen, Rob Parkinson, Sharon Stacey and Nic Thomas

448 APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors Gould and Mullaney.

449 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

It was moved by Councillor Witherford, seconded by Councillor Crooks and

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meetings held on 21 & 22 January and 13 February 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

450 ADDITIONAL URGENT BUSINESS BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

It was noted that, whilst there was no urgent business, the Car Parking update report which had been marked 'to follow' on the agenda had been circulated separately, along with a report on 'Supplementary Budget for Trade Waste' which had been omitted from the agenda and would be taken after item 13.

451 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Cope and Lynch declared a personal interest in paragraph 4.10 of the Car Parking update report due to their interest in Sparkenhoe Business Centre. Councillor Bill declared the same personal interest on arrival.

452 HINCKLEY MARKET SUBSIDY

Members received a report which provided the financial position for the Markets and asked them to consider the financial subsidy required to support the Hinckley Markets in 2014/15. It was reported that efforts were continually being made to reduce the net operating cost. Members felt the markets were very important to the people of Hinckley and the wider area. It was moved by Councillor Bray, seconded by Councillor Crooks and

RESOLVED –

- (i) the proposed subsidy for 2014/15 of £14,472 be approved;
- (ii) the difficult economic trading circumstances for market traders and the work by officers to reduce the net operating costs be recognised;

- (iii) two corresponding supplementary budgets be approved as follows:
 - (a) a decrease in the market expenditure budget of £29,300 (market contract saving);
 - (b) a reduction in the market income budget of £25,010 (market rental reduction offset by additional rental income);

and the net impact of a saving of £4,290 be noted.

Councillor Bill arrived at 6.34pm.

453 VCS SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET REQUEST

The Executive considered a request for a supplementary budget for two years in order to develop and establish sustainable VCS arrangements for the locality. The positive progress with the new VCS commissioning arrangements supported by the Council over the last 12 months was noted. Members emphasised the importance of the work of the voluntary and community sector. It was moved by Councillor Bill, seconded by Councillor Witherford and

RESOLVED – the supplementary budget of £24,660 for 2014/15 to 2015/16 be approved.

454 LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN, CITY DEAL & EUROPEAN FUNDING

Members were provided with an overview of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership's (LLEP) key strategic plans. Key examples of projects being facilitated in the Borough were discussed, including MIRA Enterprise Zone, RGF improvements to the A5 and the Sustainable Urban Extensions. These were building on the success of regeneration initiatives in the Town Centre including the Atkins Building, the new College campus, Midlands Studio School and Vocational Training Centre, Hinckley Hub and Greenfield's employment scheme. On the motion of Councillor Bray, seconded by Councillor Bill, it was

RESOLVED –

- (i) the Executive be minded to approve the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) with final approval delegated to the Leader and Chief Executive;
- (ii) the submission of the City Deal be supported with final approval delegated to the Leader and Chief Executive;
- (iii) The Hinckley & Bosworth Local Economic Plan be endorsed.

455 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A report was presented which sought approval to consult on the updated Statement of Community Involvement. It was reported that a periodic review of the Statement of Community Involvement was required as part of the Local Development Scheme. On the motion of Councillor Bray, seconded by Councillor Bill, it was

RECOMMENDED – Council approves the updated Statement of Community Involvement for public consultation.

456 COUNCIL TAX, NON-DOMESTIC RATES & HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENT WRITE-OFFS

The Executive received a report detailing recommended write-off of debts over £10,000 in respect of outstanding business rates. The report also detailed business rate, council tax and housing benefit overpayment debts written off under delegated authority. In response to a member's question, it was noted that following a debt write-off, should the debtor be tracked down, the debt could be re-instated, however many business rate debts were due to companies going into administration. It was further noted that whilst the authority's debt collection rates were similar to other authorities, the amount of debt written off was comparatively low. On the motion of Councillor Lynch, seconded by Councillor Crooks, it was

RESOLVED –

- (i) the two business rate write-offs of £26,628.35 and £27,567.82 be approved;
- (ii) the sums written off under delegated powers be noted;
- (iii) officers be congratulated for their high collection rate in relation to amounts written off.

457 REVIEW & ALIGNMENT OF EXISTING POLICIES / GUIDELINES FOR THE REVENUES & BENEFITS SERVICE

Updated policies and guidelines for the Revenues and Benefits partnership were presented to the Executive. It was moved by Councillor Lynch, seconded by Councillor Crooks and

RESOLVED – the following revised policies be approved:

- (i) Discretionary Housing Payment guidelines;
- (ii) Housing benefit and Council Tax Support Verification Policy;
- (iii) Local Housing Allowance Safeguarding Policy;
- (iv) Non Domestic Rate Hardship Relief Policy;
- (v) Non Domestic Rate Discretionary Relief guidelines;
- (vi) Recovery Policy;
- (vii) Sanctions and Prosecutions Policy.

458 MALLORY PARK

It was reported that this had been deferred to the extraordinary meeting on 16 April.

459 CAR PARKING UPDATE

Members were presented with a report which attempted to address concerns regarding car parking for the Hub. Options outlined included the use of the Rock Garage site on a temporary basis (including allocated spaces for car sharing), the use of Westfield Community Centre for LCC staff, and longer term possibilities including re-designation of car parks and potential provision off Willowbank Road.

Concern was expressed regarding the current situation whereby staff in the Hub with permits for Willowbank or Brunel Road car parks, continued to park on the residential streets surrounding the Hub. It was felt that if staff were charged for parking permits, the situation would worsen. The Leader reported that HBBC officers had been asked to be considerate to residents when choosing parking locations, and he asked that senior officers at Leicestershire County Council be asked to do the same for their staff. Members requested an update in three months.

It was moved by Councillor Lynch, seconded by Councillor Bray and

RESOLVED –

- (i) the use of the Rock Garage site as temporary staff parking be approved;
- (ii) negotiation for the use of Westfield Community Centre as parking for LCC staff be supported;
- (iii) extension of staff concessionary parking for a further six months be approved;
- (iv) future options be noted and explored at the appropriate time;
- (v) an update be brought back to the Executive in three months.

460 SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET FOR TRADE WASTE

Approval was sought for revisions to income and expenditure budgets in respect of Trade Waste services following notification from the County Council, as disposal authority, that waste disposal charges would apply to trade waste collected from 1 April 2014. In response to a member's question, it was reported that the current arrangement with Leicestershire County Council provided the best value for money. On the motion of Councillor Crooks, seconded by Councillor Lynch, it was

RESOLVED –

- (i) a supplementary income budget of £12,000 be approved;
- (ii) a supplementary expenditure budget of £38,500 for estimated disposal charges effective from 1 April 2014 be approved.

461 OPTIONS FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION FACILITY IN THORNTON

The Executive was informed of the development of a model of sustainable community led solutions proposed for St Peter's Drive, Thornton, through the provision of a Neighbourhood Action Hub, following the 'Neighbourhood Takes Charge' project in the same area. It was stated that this was a pilot model which could be used in other areas. All Members present felt that it was an important initiative which would bring agencies

and the community together. On the motion of Councillor Bray, seconded by Councillor Bill, it was

RESOLVED –

- (i) work already undertaken in St Peter's Drive, Thornton, be noted;
- (ii) the development of a community led solution in St Peter's Drive, Thornton, by way of a Neighbourhood Action Hub, be approved;
- (iii) a one off capital budget of £15,500 financed from revenue to fund the set up costs of the hub, be approved;
- (iv) a supplementary budget of £23,311 to fund revenue costs of the hub to be funded from the HRA regeneration reserve be approved.

462 TENANCY CONDITIONS

Members were advised of proposed new tenancy conditions for council tenants and two related policies – the Successions Policy and the Recharge Policy. It was explained that the recharge policy would charge for repairs and was intended to make tenants aware of the consequences of their actions. With regard to the Successions Policy, it was noted that this had been updated following new legislation as part of the Localism Act which allowed greater discretion in agreeing successions of tenancies. During debate, the following points were raised:

- There would be wide consultation on the proposals
- The changes would apply to not only new tenants, but would also be applied to existing tenants, given the correct consultation and notice
- Flexible payment plans would be available as part of the recharge policy
- Accidental damage may be covered by the tenant's contents insurance policy depending on the nature of the accident, and the authority also had its own insurance
- A tidy garden scheme was being considered to assist elderly tenants and a tool share scheme to provide equipment for people who were able to look after their garden themselves
- If a tenant left a property in a poor state, they would be recharged for the work if they had left a forwarding address. If not, they would not be able to get housing with the authority again as they would be considered to be in debt
- The Probation Service had assisted in the past with providing people for gardening and DIY.

A Members asked if other RSLs would be part of the initiatives, and in response it was noted that it was up to each provider, but that contact could be made with them to ask.

It was moved by Councillor Bray, seconded by Councillor Bill, and

RESOLVED – the Tenancy Conditions, Successions Policy and Recharge Policy be approved for consultation with tenants.

463 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

On the motion of Councillor Bray seconded by Councillor Bill, it was

RESOLVED – in accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the disclosure of exempt

information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 10 of Part I of Schedule 12A of that Act.

464 TRANSFORMING HOUSING & COMMUNITY SAFETY SERVICES

The Executive received a report which proposed increased capacity and a restructure in the Housing & Community Safety service which intended to improve services to customers. A consultation response from Unison had been circulated to the Executive for their consideration. The Unison response was noted and agreed as part of the report. Members asked that an update be brought back when the new structure was in place. It was moved by Councillor Bray, seconded by Councillor Bill, and

RESOLVED –

- (i) the additional capacity and restructure be approved;
- (ii) the supplementary budgets outlined in the report be approved;
- (iii) a further report be brought back to the Executive once the new structure was in place.

(The Meeting closed at 7.40 pm)

CHAIRMAN