

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL  
30 SEPTEMBER 2008 AT 6.30 P.M.

PRESENT: MR. J.G. BANNISTER - MAYOR  
MR. K. NICHOLS - DEPUTY MAYOR

Also in attendance: Mr. R. Birch

Mr. P.R. Batty, Mr. P.S. Bessant, Mr. D.C. Bill, Mr. C.W. Boothby, Mr. J.C. Bown, Mr. S.L. Bray, Mrs. R. Camamile, Mr. M.B. Cartwright, Mr. D.S. Cope, Mr. W.J. Crooks, Mrs. S. Francks, Mrs. A. Hall, Mr. P.A.S. Hall, Mr. D.W. Inman, Mr. C. Ladkin, Mr. M.R. Lay, Mr. K.W.P. Lynch, Mr. R. Mayne, Mr. K. Morrell, Mr. L.J.P. O'Shea, Mr. A.J. Smith, Mr. B.E. Sutton, Mr. R. Ward, Ms. B.M. Witherford and Mr. D.O. Wright.

Officers in attendance: Mr. S.J. Atkinson, Mr. B. Cullen, Miss L. Horton, Mr S Kohli, Mrs. P.I. Pitt and Mr. T.M. Prowse.

203 PRAYER

The Reverend Jane Gibbs offered prayer.

204 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Mrs. M. Aldridge, Mr. D.M. Gould, Mr. C.G. Joyce, Ms. W.A. Moore and Mrs. J. Richards.

205 MINUTES (C34)

Subject to the substitution in the penultimate line of Minute No. 190 of the word 'run' for the word 'walk', it was moved by Mr Lay seconded by Mr Bray and

RESOLVED - the minutes, as now amended, of the meeting held on 9 September 2008 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

At this juncture the Mayor indicated that the urgent item relating to the Constitution of Committees due to be considered at this evening's meeting had been withdrawn.

206 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr. Inman declared a personal interest in Report C40 in that he was involved with Age Concern.

207 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor indicated that the meeting of the Council Services Select Committee scheduled for 1 October 2008 had been cancelled. The Mayor referred to the successful visit to the Borough of a delegation from Le Grand Quevilly. Members' support was sought to the forthcoming Youth Council initiative on 16 October and to a fund raising event by MENCAP at Sketchley Grange Hotel on 25 October.

The following questions and replies were received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.1.

(a) Question raised by Mr. R. Ward and addressed to Mr. D. C. Bill

"On 7 May 2008 Councillor Bill told the Council that Morris Homes had the legal option to purchase the Authority's land at Brodick Road, Hinckley and confirmed that this could be exercised by the developer "at any point within the next six months".

Somewhat confusingly, Councillor Lynch is quoted in the Hinckley Times on 18 September 2008 in respect of this land sale saying "...who is to say that in six months' time they (Morris Homes) will be in a position to exercise the option?"

Surely, if Councillor Bill's statement to Members on 7 May is correct, Morris Homes' option to purchase the green space at Brodick Road expires around the end of October 2008 rather than in March 2009.

Therefore, firstly would the Leader of the Council clear up the confusion created by Councillor Lynch's comments in the Hinckley Times and inform Members of the exact date Morris Homes' option to purchase the Brodick Road green space expires?

Secondly, in light of the stated desire of local residents to retain this area for recreational purposes and the unfilled promises made by the Liberal Democrats to this effect, should Morris Homes fail to take up the option to purchase the land would the Leader of the Council welcome the support of the Conservative Group in permanently designating Brodick Road green space as a site for public leisure use?"

Response from Mr. D. C. Bill

Both of the statements that Councillor Ward quotes are correct. Morris Homes were granted the option to purchase the land at Brodick Road and this option was to expire on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2008 and I would, once again, remind Councillor Ward that it was his Administration that committed this Council to that legal agreement with Morris Homes.

The recent downturn in the economic climate has resulted in further discussions with Morris Homes, which recently concluded in providing them with an extension to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. This extension however has only been granted in return for surety over transfer of the sale proceeds before the end of this financial year and an undertaking, which officers have now negotiated (and should have been negotiated during the Conservative leadership), to receive sale proceeds from the disposal of any further ransom strips. This has previously been addressed in Councillor Lynch's response to Councillor Batty's question at the last Council meeting.

With regard to the desire of local residents, perhaps the Conservatives should have considered this before committing this Council to the disposal just prior to the last local elections

(b) Question raised by Mr. R. Ward and addressed to Mr. S. L. Bray

"Would the Executive Member agree that following the continued success of the Tudor Fair held recently on Argents Mead it is necessary to secure the future of this excellent event? As I understand that funding issues may be a potential threat to the Tudor Fair would an approach to the Tin Hat Partnership as a potential sponsor for the event - recognising the past while embracing the future as it were - be appropriate?"

Response from Mr. S. L. Bray

"Mr Mayor, I thank Cllr Ward for the question on an event which I would want us to continue to support.

The Tudor Fair is an excellent event that encourages footfall into Hinckley Town Centre and has good tourism links with Bosworth Battlefield. Over 2,000 people attended this month's event. Councillors will be pleased to know that the Tudor Fair is being scheduled into the events calendar for 2009.

Officers continually seek external sponsorship and Cllr Wards suggestion to seek funding via Tin Hat Partnership will be investigated".

209 POSITION STATEMENT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

In his presentation the Leader highlighted the following:-

- Discussions at this evening's meeting on the economic down-turn.
- The need to ensure that the Council's energy costs are kept to a minimum.
- The proposal of the Local Government Association in calling for a massive national investment programme for home insulation.
- The regeneration of Barwell and Earl Shilton.
- Joint working with the Locality Partnership in developing children's centres.
- The CPA review 'on site' between 15 and 19 September 2008 and the positive contribution of staff, partners and elected Members of all groups.

210 SCRUTINY COMMISSION MEETING - 28 AUGUST 2008 (C35)

In presenting the minutes of this meeting Mr. Lay referred to the Commission's review of the Local Strategic Partnership, to discussions on the review of the voluntary and community sector infrastructure in Leicestershire (with the Commission expressing its strong support for the work of Voluntary Action Hinckley and Bosworth) and to consideration of proposed improvements to Street Scene Services.

211 HINCKLEY TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP BOARD - APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTORS (C36)

Council approval having been sought to Board Membership of the Hinckley Town Centre Partnership and following clarification that the allocation of two places was Board-driven and would not involve the Council in liability, it was moved by Mr. Bray, seconded by Mr. Bill and

RESOLVED - approval be given to representation by Members and Officers on the Board of the Hinckley Town Centre Partnership as defined in section 3 of the report of the Deputy Chief Executive.

212 LOCALITY PARTNERSHIP BUDGET (C37)

As required under the Council's financial procedure rules approval was sought to the establishment of a new revenue income/expenditure budget for a Locality Partnership Co-ordinator. The role of the postholder complemented the Borough's five new children's centres which had been developed by the County Council (which was funding this initiative) over the past 6 months. The Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Regeneration emphasised that the benefits of this scheme, which was a central Government initiative, would be felt borough-wide.

On the motion of Mr. Bray, seconded by Mr. Smith it was

RESOLVED - the establishment of a new revenue expenditure and income budget (funded by Leicestershire County Council) of £394,425 for 2008/09 for the Locality Partnership Co-ordinator's project be approved.

213 COMMUNITY SAFETY FUNDING 2008/09 (C38)

Reported to Council was the following:-

- (a) Confirmed external funding allocated to the Hinckley and Bosworth Community Safety Partnership for the financial year 2008/2009 through the Local Area Agreement 2 (LAA2) Community Safety Revenue Fund, the Leicestershire Constabulary South Area Basic Command Unit (BCU) funding and Leicestershire County Council Domestic Violence Stretch Target Funding.
- (b) The key priority outcomes to which the above funding had been allocated within the Partnership's Spending Plan.
- (c) How the funding had been allocated to priorities within the Community Safety Partnership's Spending Plan 2008/2009.

Although the key focus was currently on addressing issues in Barwell and Earl Shilton (which both had a Priority Action Plan) the Executive Member for Housing and Community Safety stressed that the Community Safety Partnership operated throughout the Borough.

Members being fully supportive of the working of the Community Safety Partnership, it was moved by Mr. Cope, seconded by Mr. Crooks and

RESOLVED - supplementary estimates totalling £93,209 to be funded by external contributions as detailed in the table in paragraph 5.3 of the report of the Deputy Chief Executive be approved.

214 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (LDF): CORE STRATEGY RURAL HOUSING NUMBERS (C39)

With the Council in the process of replacing the Local Development Plan with a new LDF, Members' approval was now sought for the Rural Housing Distribution to be included in the Core Strategy Submission document. Such Strategy did not allocate sites for development but did set out the general areas where development would be appropriate. Once the Rural Housing Distribution was agreed the final Strategy would be considered by Council on 28 October 2008.

Members again referred to the need for the provision of affordable homes within the Borough, particularly low cost rural housing, an issue which was currently being addressed by Planning Officers.

Mr. Lynch left the meeting at 7.18 p.m. returning at 7.22 p.m.

The Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Regeneration indicated that the initial figures for additional houses in individual rural settlements had been amended using a methodology agreed by the LDF Working Group and that the Council was committed to build a total of 11,700 houses before 2026, 800 of which would be in rural areas. Members were reminded that the cross-party LDF Working Group had, on 27 August 2008, endorsed the proposed distribution. Whilst recognising the need for a new Strategy the Leader of the Council called for continued discussions to all parties' mutual benefit whilst seeking to integrate the expansion of existing settlement.

Mrs. Hall left the meeting a 7.38 p.m.

In accordance with Council Procedure rule 18.4, 5 Members present requested that voting on the recommendations contained in the report of the Director of Community and Planning Services be recorded. A vote was taken and recorded as follows:-

For the resolution:-

Mr. K. Nichols, Mr. D.C. Bill, Mr. S.L. Bray, Mr. D.S. Cope, Mr. W.J. Crooks, Mrs. S. Francks, Mrs. A. Hall, Mr. P. Hall, Mr. D.W. Inman, Mr. K.W.P. Lynch, Mr. R. Mayne, Mr. A.J. Smith, Ms. B.M. Witherford, Mr. D.O. Wright (14).

(Mrs. Hall returned to the meeting at 7.42 p.m.).

Against the resolution:-

Mr. P.R. Batty, Mr. P.S. Bessant, Mr. C.W. Boothby, Mr. J.C. Bown, Mrs. R. Camamile, Mr. M.B. Cartwright, Mr. C. Ladkin, Mr. M.R. Lay, Mr. K. Morrell, Mr. L.J.P. O'Shea, Mr. B.E. Sutton and Mr. R. Ward (12).

It was then moved by Mr. Bray, seconded by Mr. Bill and

RESOLVED - the rural housing distribution set out in Appendix 1 to the Report of the Director of Community and Planning Services be included in the Core Strategy Submission Document.

215 ECONOMIC PROSPECTS - A LOCAL RESPONSE (C40)

In consequence of the current financial down-turn and the need to support the local community the Chief Executive reported on proposed measures which this Council and its partners needed to put into place. Outlined also was the impact of the down-turn in the national economy on the income in certain service areas and on the utility costs of this Council. Additionally, endorsement was sought to consult on the draft Economic Regeneration Strategy 2008-2012, which complemented the package of measures to respond to the current and predicted economic climate.

Whilst limited in what it could do financially, it was vital that the Council take the initiative in addressing the issues currently facing the community. The Executive Member for Finance indicated that following consideration of the six months out-turn figures to 30 September 2008 the Council would be in a better position to consider budgetary provision for 2008/09 and the proposal to provide further funding for 2008/09 to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).

At this juncture Mr. Ward declared an interest as a Board Member of the CAB and for clarification the Monitoring Officer reminded Members of part 2 of the Code of Conduct for Councillors (adopted by the Council in accordance with Section 51 of the Local Government Act 2000), contained within the Constitution and which related to Members' personal and prejudicial interests.

Members being fully supportive of the work undertaken by the voluntary sector the Chief Executive indicated that it was not the intention at this evening's meeting for Members to consider specific amounts of additional funding but that it was hoped that figures could be presented at the 28 October Council meeting.

Mr. Bown left the meeting at 8.10 p.m., returning at 8.14 p.m.

It was moved by Mr. Bill, seconded by Mr. Lynch and

RESOLVED

- (i) the implementation of the phased strategy set out in Sections 4.1 to 4.4 of the report, specifically the commitment to funding for the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and other agencies be endorsed and agreed;
- (ii) the draft Economic Regeneration Strategy (2008-2012) for consultation purposes be endorsed;
- (iii) Members note in particular the potential impact on income to the Council outlined in Section 4.5 of the report of the Chief Executive and agree that the Directors of Finance and Community and Planning Services monitor the situation and report to a future Council meeting on the steps to be taken to mitigate the impact on the Council; and

- (iv) the impact on utility costs of the Council outlined in Section 4.6 of the report be noted and that the Director of Finance monitors the situation and report to a future Council meeting on the steps to be taken to mitigate the impact on the Council.

216 MOTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 13

- (a) It was moved by Mr. Bray, seconded by Mrs. Francks that

"Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council expresses its extreme concerns at the rocketing petrol and diesel prices, which are forcing individuals to pay sky high prices at the pumps and forcing public services and industry to finance escalating costs.

Council notes that without UK taxes petrol would be currently 41.2p a litre and diesel 48.8p a litre. Council further notes that the Energy Trends and Prices statistics, produced by the Department for Business, Industry and Regulatory Reform reveal that the UK's taxation of petrol is the third highest out of all EU member states.

Council further notes that the UK treasury is netting substantial increasing Fuel Duty and VAT revenues as a direct result of the increasing fuel process.

In the light of all of the above Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council calls on the current Labour Westminster Government to act decisively to protect the interests of families, public services and industry by immediately introducing a Fuel Duty Regulator which will use the increasing revenues from VAT to reduce Fuel Duty and so the price per litre of petrol and diesel.

Council resolves to circulate this motion to the Members' of Parliament for the District seeking their support for the above action.

The Council also calls on the Government to improve public transport, particularly local rail services within the Borough in order to encourage alternative forms of travel.

The Council also expresses its deep concerns over the increasing home fuel bills being faced by residents across the Borough and calls on the Government to take action ahead of the winter."

Whilst recognising that some assistance was available for the needy and that the Council should retain its positive attitude, it was agreed unanimously that this motion be supported.

Prior to moving the following motion, which was seconded by Mr. Bray, Mr. Bill referred to the High Court rulings today on the immigration policy relating to members of the Brigade of Gurkhas who had served in the British Army prior to 1997.

- (b) "This Council recognises the extensive contribution to the defence of this country by the members of the Brigade of Gurkhas, both serving and retired,

and believes that the heroism displayed by these brave soldiers should be properly recognised by the country they fought so hard to protect.

The Council calls on the Chief Executive to write to the Defence Secretary to express concern at the unfair treatment of Nepalese members of the Brigade of Gurkhas, in particular those who served before 1997, and to call for equality in pay and pension rights, and the right of abode in the United Kingdom for these soldiers and their families."

Mr. Smith left the meeting at 8.30 p.m.

The motion received unanimous support.

(the meeting closed at 8.34 p.m.)