

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL  
29 JULY 2009 AT 6.30 P.M.

PRESENT: MR. K. NICHOLS - MAYOR  
MRS. S. FRANCKS - DEPUTY MAYOR

Mrs. M. Aldridge, Mr. J.G. Bannister, Mr. P.R. Batty, Mr. P.S. Bessant, Mr. D.C. Bill, Mr. J.C. Bown, Mr. S.L. Bray, Mrs. R. Camamile, Mr. M.B. Cartwright, Mr. D.S. Cope, Mr. W.J. Crooks, Mr. D.M. Gould, Mrs. A. Hall, Mr. P.A.S. Hall, Mr. D.W. Inman, Mr. C.G. Joyce, Mr. C. Ladkin, Mr. M. R. Lay, Mr. R. Mayne, Dr. J.R. Moore, Mr. K. Morrell, Mr. L.J.P. O'Shea, Mrs. J. Richards, Mr. A. J. Smith, Mrs. S. Sprason, Mr. B.E. Sutton, Mr. R. Ward, Ms. B.M. Witherford and Mr. D.O. Wright.

Officers in attendance: Mr. S.J. Atkinson, Ms. V. Bunting, Miss L. Horton, Mr. S. Kohli, Mrs. P.I. Pitt , Mr. T.M. Prowse, Ms. S.A. Smith and Mrs. S. Stacey.

104 SILENCE

A minute's silence was observed in memory of Mr. J.A. Davenport, a former member of this Authority, who had recently passed away.

105 PRAYERS

The Reverend Canon B. Davis offered prayer.

106 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence was submitted on behalf of Messrs C.W. Boothby and K.W.P. Lynch and Ms. W.A. Moore.

107 MINUTES (C13)

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

RESOLVED –the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2009 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

108 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

109 QUESTIONS

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

(a) Question raised by Mr. P.R. Batty and addressed to Mr. S. L. Bray

"I would like to ask the Executive Member for Green Spaces and Leisure whether it is good practice to inform Parish Councils and publicise the fact that the Borough Council's Sports Road Show will take place on Parks in

their Parish and then with barely 2 weeks notice, advise the Parish Council that the published event has been cancelled due to poor attendance in a previous year and the need for economies to be made but at the same time effectively pass the responsibility for any disappointment to local kids back to the Parish Council by offering a pitiful £200 donation for the Parish to organise their own replacement event with qualified coaches in less than 2 weeks. Would the Executive Member confirm whether this sort of action that will almost certainly disappoint a number of young children who have seen the Sports Road Show advertised can be considered to be consistent with that of a Council that prides itself with the Logo "A Borough To be Proud Of"? Could I also please ask the Executive Member to provide a list of the venues where the Summer Sports Road show will still be taking place this Summer and a list of last year's venues and attendances at each venue."

Response from Mr. S. L. Bray

"Councillor Batty will be aware of the difficult decisions that this council is having to make in order to deliver its services within budget. This applies equally to Cultural services as to all other services. It is regrettable that the level of provision of Sports Roadshows has had to be reduced.

Throughout June, Officers liaised with the Strategic Leadership Board and Executive Members with regards to provision of summer activities. Reviewing operational activity and aligning resources to where the need is required is ongoing.

Councillor Batty refers to '2 weeks notice' but I can confirm that Parishes were notified in writing on 19 June, four weeks prior to the start of the Roadshow.

Having reviewed last years activities, on average only 17 children and young people within your Parish participated in the Sports Roadshow. To offer the best possible service to young people from across the borough and within budgetary constraints, the Council is targeting its resources towards the Priority Neighbourhoods and those sessions in Parishes with high attendance figures.

Details of previous years' attendance figures, revised schedule for 2009 have been forwarded to the Groby Parish Clerk.

I would like to remind the Councillor that the LSP's What's Going Down brochure, issued to all young people in the Parish, details on page 28 sports courses for 5-11 year olds that are being held at Groby Community College. Therefore, there is existing local sports provision.

It is a shame, given the strong feelings on this matter, that Parish and Ward Councillors have not worked together and submitted a funding bid to provide additional activities for young people.

Please be assured that the Council is committed to working in partnership with Parish Councils and by empowering at a local level, opportunities for children and young people can be maximised. However, all activities of the Council must be managed within available budgets."

## Roadshow average numbers 2008

Roadshow	Ratby	7	Stopped
Roadshow	Hinckley	35	
Roadshow	Burbage	24	
Roadshow	Barwell	31	
Roadshow	Newbold Verdon	16	Stopped
<b>Roadshow</b>	<b>Groby</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Stopped</b>
Roadshow	Clarendon	36	
Roadshow	Thornton	3	Stopped
Roadshow	Markfield	23	
Roadshow	Stoke G	35	
Roadshow	Witherley	9	Stopped

In response to a supplementary question from Mr. Batty Mr. Bray stated that he did not agree that insufficient notice had been given to Parish Councils of the cancellation of events.

(b) Question raised by Mr. P.R. Batty and addressed to Mr. D.O. Wright

“I would like to ask the Executive Member for Corporate Services as to who made the insensitive decision that now requires Elected Members to pay for their own Data Protection Registration necessary in respect of their role as elected Councillors. At a time when Members of Parliament are being accused of abusing their extremely generous expenses and media allegations that all Councillors are paying themselves generous salaries, how can the Council justify such “penny pinching” when Members of this Council already very much have to pay their own expenses relating to their duties such as phone bills, postage, stationary and IT costs. It is not the £35 additional expense that bothers me but it is the principle of the apparent discriminatory attitude by the Council towards elected members. Therefore, could the Executive Member please publicly state for the benefit of the media the amount of basic allowance that Elected Members of this Council receive before tax and confirm that this is among the lowest in the region, thus by enlarge providing excellent value for money to the Borough’s Council Tax payers in respect of the many hardworking Councillors in this Chamber, who unlike their counterparts in other Authorities are not provided with PC’s, the cost of internet connection or the reimbursement of other costs incurred in their duties. Finally, could the Executive Member in the light of the forthcoming introduction of the home-working policy confirm that the removal of duty related expenses will be consistently applied to both officers and elected members.”

Response from Mr. D.O. Wright

“Can I thank Councillor Batty for his questions.

Firstly with regard to the issue of Data Protection Registration, the decision was taken by the Head of Corporate and Scrutiny Services, who is also the Council’s Data Protection Officer with the agreement of the Chief Executive. The Cost to each individual Councillor is £35.00, however the cost to the authority is £1,500 inclusive of administration and officer time costs. In this time of having to account for every £ spent of tax payers money it was determined to be an appropriate action to discontinue covering the cost of notifications.

What is important to note is that Members only need to notify – pay the £35.00 if they hold information which IS NOT related to carrying out work relating to council business and IS NOT related to acting on behalf of a political party, as these areas are covered by the Councils notification and the Political Parties notification respectively. A letter and guidance on this has previously been issued to Councillors.

The basic allowance for elected members before tax is £272.92 paid monthly. With regard to others in the region, allowances vary as do additional benefits such as provision of IT equipment. Allowances for members are reviewed by an Independent Remuneration Panel who makes recommendations to Council for agreement. The ICT Scrutiny Panel is currently considering the provision of laptops and internet connections for all Members paid for by the Council.

With regard to Home Working, the Council has a Flexible Working Policy for its employees which deals with both time and location flexibility, promoting improvements in service delivery, staff retention and monetary savings. The Flexible Working Policy does not apply to elected Members.”

Following a supplementary question from Mr. Batty, Mr. Wright responded that he was confident that the letter to all Members giving guidance on notification was comprehensive and that his response today had fully addressed the issues raised by Mr. Batty.

Mr. Sutton left the meeting at 6.43 p.m.

#### 110 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor highlighted some of his recent visits, as follows:-

- To local schools to attend various events
- The Proms in the Park Concert at Hollycroft Park
- The Wind in the Willows production at Hollycroft Park
- Attendance at an armed forces event at Ratby which had raised some £1,500 for 'Help for Heroes'
- The Royal Leicester Tigers Service at Tigers Wood, Bagworth

Messrs. Gould and Sutton entered the meeting at 6.46 p.m.

#### 111 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: CORE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT – PROPOSED CHANGES TO POLICY 15 (C14)

In presenting this the Executive Member for Culture, Regeneration and Planning emphasised that Members' agreement was being sought solely to revisions to Policy 15 of the Core Strategy Submission Document. Concerns were raised by certain Members that affordable houses should be available to meet local needs and that the proposals now being put forward were not sustainable and did not properly address the needs of the Borough. The call was made that the six-week period of consultation on Policy 15 be doubled and the suggestion made that a working group be set up to look into the delivery of affordable homes. The Executive Member for Culture, Regeneration and Planning responded that the timetable had previously been agreed with the Planning Inspectorate and could not be amended but gave an assurance that the Council would seek to continue to maximise levels of affordable housing.

An amendment was moved by Mr. Bessant, seconded by Mr. O'Shea that the consultation period be extended from 6 to 12 weeks and that a cross-party working group be formed to consider Policy 15. Upon being put to a vote the amendment was defeated by 16 votes to 14. It was then moved by Mr. Bray, seconded by Mr. Cope that the following be agreed:

- (i) the undertaking of a 6-week period of consultation on Policy 15 only of the Core Strategy submission document and Sustainability Appraisal from 3 August to 14 September 2009 inclusive; and
- (ii) the revised Core Strategy Policy 15 be submitted for examination to the Secretary of State following analysis of the representations received during the 6-week consultation period.

A further vote was taken, again by way of a show of hands, with 16 Members voting for the Motion and 14 against. This Motion was declared carried.

## 112 MOTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 13

Mr. Smith left the meeting at 7.12 p.m., returning at 7.14 p.m.

- a) It was moved by Mr. Bray, seconded by Mr. Mayne that:

“This Council notes with deep concern the proposed reduction of the number of firefighters at Hinckley Fire Station by 8. This is on top of the reduction of the number of fire engines from 2 to 1 a couple of years ago. This Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Fire Authority and urge them not to make further cuts in fire fighting provision at Hinckley.”

An amendment was then moved by Mrs. Camamile and seconded by Mrs. Richards that:

“This Council notes the concern at the proposed reduction of the number of fire fighters at Hinckley Fire Station and request the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer to visit the Council at the earliest possible date to present the case upon which he has recommended the changes to staffing levels at Hinckley Fire Station”.

Although all of those present were fully supportive of the need to raise concerns regarding the possible reduction in fire fighters at Hinckley Fire Station and were mindful that the consultation period regarding such proposals apparently ended on 1 August 2009 opinion was divided as to the form of wording which should accompany this Council's representations to the Fire and Rescue Service.

Mr. Ladkin left the meeting at 7.30 p.m.

Since it was acknowledged that both motions had merit it was agreed that a combined motion be drafted for Members' approval and in consequence at 7.37 p.m. Mr. Bray, Mrs. Camamile and the Chief Executive left the Chamber. A five minute adjournment followed and the meeting reconvened at 7.42 p.m. at which time the Chief Executive read out the following

“This Council expresses its deep concern at the proposed reduction of the number of fire fighters at Hinckley Fire Station by 8. This is on top of the

reduction of the number of fire engines from 2 to 1 a couple of years ago. This Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Fire Authority and urge them not to make further cuts in fire fighting provision at Hinckley.

The Council requests also that the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer and the Chair of the Fire Authority visit this Council at the earliest possible date to present the case upon which they have recommended the changes for staffing levels at Hinckley Fire Station”.

This motion was agreed unanimously.

- (b) Circulated at the meeting was a briefing note prepared by the Directors of Community and Planning Services and Finance on Local Authorities bidding for Social Housing Grant.

It was moved by Mr. Lay, seconded by Mr. Bown that:

“ This Council welcomes the recent moves by the government to support the building of new Council Houses.

We welcome the suggested moves to scrap the current negative housing subsidy regime which would free up millions of pounds for investment in the Borough Council housing stock.

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council apply for new government funding at the earliest opportunity and find suitable council owned land, to build new Council Houses here in the Borough and in doing so help families in desperate need of decent housing”.

Mr. Cope then moved the following amendment which was seconded by Mr. Crooks:

“That this Council through officer and lead member involvement considers the new government funding and produces a robust case taking into consideration all the current drivers on its finances and once the negative housing subsidy has either been scrapped or clearly identified as to its impact on this Council’s individual position, acquire and/or identify land for the provision of new council houses in this Borough, which will bring much needed help to families requiring decent social housing”.

Although acknowledging that the original motion was well-intentioned and there was merit in a scheme which might lead to the provision of new housing stock concerns were raised that there would be a significant impact on the Council’s Capital Programme should a bid to the Homes and Communities Agency for an allocation of funding be proceeded with. Following an extensive debate as to whether the Council should, having identified sites, bid for government funding Mr. Lay indicated that in view of the comments now made he would withdraw the second strand of his Motion.

The amendment by Mr. Cope to the original Motion was then voted upon by means of a show of hands with 12 voting in favour of the amendment ,14 against and with 3 Members abstaining. The original Motion of Mr. Lay was then put to the vote and a show of hands indicated that 19 Members had voted for that Motion, 2 against and 8 had abstained. It was thereupon

RESOLVED -

- (i) This Council welcomes the recent moves by the government to support the building of new Council homes, and;
- (ii) Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council apply for new government funding at the earliest opportunity and find suitable council owned land, to build new Council Houses here in the Borough and in doing so help families in desperate need of decent housing.

On the subject of Motions generally the Leader of the Council urged that anyone wishing to propose amendments to Motions listed on the agenda notify these to the appropriate officers well in advance of the meeting and it was agreed that the Constitution should be amended to reflect this.

(The meeting closed at 8.20 p.m.)

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At the conclusion of the meeting the Mayor announced that he had agreed to the September meeting of the Council being brought forward by one week to 15 September 2009.