

Position Statement of Leader to Council - 5 July 2011

Mr Mayor, fellow Councillors, members of the public, Officers and Press

This is my first Position Statement of the new Council term, but already a great deal has happened, most of it positive, since the elections in May, both at a national and a local level.

I will deal with local events first, reflecting the spirit and practice of “localism”, which rightly dominated the Annual LGA Conference last week in Birmingham; more of which later.

We have had two attempts by members of the travelling community to illegally occupy land in the Borough in recent weeks – both in the Markfield area. On both occasions, early warnings from the community, followed by swift and coordinated action between the Police, our officers and the County Travellers’ Unit, ensured that the travellers were moved on and the sites secured within a few hours. I am sure that all Members will join me in congratulating all concerned for their effective actions, particularly officers of this Council.

Last week saw the deadlines for submissions of bids to CLG/BIS for funding/support from the Regional Growth Fund (phase 2) and for Enterprise Zone status. Bids in both areas were submitted by MIRA, supported by this Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). As soon as last Friday, MIRA hosted a visit from CLG officials, which I attended with Bill Cullen. The feedback was very positive and the officials were clearly impressed with our joint working. They took back also some significant messages about the importance of joint work on the A5 trunk road; I, along with others, will be meeting with the Highways Agency tomorrow morning. I look forward to positive action and conclusions to all these initiatives in coming months, to secure the significant benefits they can bring to our Borough and its communities.

Turning to the Hinckley Hub, Sanjiv Kohli and his team have worked very hard to ensure that our partners could be brought together in one location in Hinckley, not just for the financial benefits to all of us, but, more importantly, for the service and community benefits which would accrue from a number of agencies literally working together from the same base. Those discussions continue.

Can I congratulate also all those who contributed to a fantastic and well-supported event in the town last weekend – the second Soapbox Derby. Whilst the Town Centre Partnership is the main organiser (and did an excellent job), officers of this Council did a great deal to facilitate the event, which was even more successful than in 2010.

Members will see from the agenda for tonight and the attached papers, that the financial position of the Council remains sound and sustainable, although we will need to continue the process of securing additional income (capital and revenue) and savings over the coming months and years. One significant contribution to that achievement is highlighted in the final report on the agenda tonight. Can I pay tribute to all the employees of this Council for putting us in that position. Can I pay tribute also to the excellent and constructive work of the Scrutiny Commission, which would have been picked up later in the presentation of the Commission’s end of term report. This will be received by the Council at its next meeting.

The final local issue relates to a response by officers to a request from Swanswell Ltd to locate their operations in Hinckley, having been commissioned by the County Council to provide a local service. Our officers made an offer of two floors at Florence House. I think that it is fair to say that all Members, and indeed most people who have commented in the last few days in the media and at the public meetings arranged by officers, agree that there is a need for such a facility in the town. The Executive listened carefully to all the comments received from local residents and decided not to proceed with it at Florence House. However, this means that the facility remains unprovided. To that end, the Executive, whilst confirming formally that it will not be located at Florence House, will be seeking to identify alternative sites and consider all options openly and transparently (which had always been the intention). We must play the role of local enabler to the best of our ability in such circumstances and not allow politics to interfere with that role, when such a vital service is under consideration. I hope all Members can at least support that point and I look forward to our constructively discussing this in the next few days.

Turning to the national scene, the LGA Conference last week received some important announcements from the Prime Minister on Pensions Reform (local government pensions will be - rightly - considered separately from the rest of the public sector), and from the Deputy Prime Minister on the Resource Review/Business Rates Retention. Whilst there remains much detail yet to resolve before the publication of a Local Government Finance Bill later this year, both proposals are generally in the right direction. Let us hope that the devil is (for once) not in the detail.

The Prime Minister did say that local government is “doing an excellent job in tough circumstances” and that he wants to make our job “less, not more, difficult”. He wants government to be local, with community budgets and the primary means for “getting things done”. His Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles, gave a tough message that the pace of the last twelve months will quicken over the next twelve! Nick Clegg said clearly that no Local Authority will receive less funding (in year one) than they do now, when localisation of business rates is implemented – probably in 3/4 years’ time – and Tax Incremental Funding will be included in the Finance Bill. CLG will be seeking more local pilots on community budgeting and our pilot on locality working in Hinckley could be put forward once the formal invitation is issued.

It was perhaps significant that a serving Prime Minister addressed the Conference for the first time, along with Leaders of the other two main parties, Nick Clegg and Ed Miliband. Other senior Ministers attended also, with Eric Pickles and Greg Clark (Minister for Decentralisation) being particularly conspicuous; both attending the District Council Network Assembly on the final day. This was seen as an emerging recognition of the increasing influence of that body, which now represents 180 of the 201 Districts in the country, and of the “local” impact and importance of District Councils. Long may that continue.

Mr Mayor, I commend this statement to Members of this Council

COUNCIL
5 JULY 2011

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

Agenda item 7

a) Question asked by Councillor R Ward and addressed to Councillor SL Bray

"To avoid the possibility of a two centre town would the portfolio holder bring the council up to date on the initiatives in place to make certain this does not happen. The connection between the proposed Bus Station development and the main shopping centre of Castle Street will be key to the success of Hinckley Town Centre. The obvious route of Station Road between the two will require imaginative thought to deliver real connection between these key Town markets. Will the portfolio holder inform the members on the progress?"

Response from Councillor SL Bray

"Dear Councillor Ward

Thank you for your question and interest in the regeneration proposals for Hinckley Town Centre.

I am pleased to report that as part of a formal agreement with the Tin Hat Partnership, the Council has secured a major financial commitment of up to £300K to deliver improvements to Station Road and to introduce residents parking in the vicinity of the Bus Station site.

The plans for the improvements are being programmed to take place with the development of the Crescent scheme on the Bus Station site to ensure any disruption in the Town Centre is minimised and works are coordinated effectively. Full engagement with key stakeholders and businesses will take place during the development of the detailed scheme.

I am confident that with the measures I have explained above key improvements can be made to ensure enhanced connections are made between the new Crescent development and Castle Street."

b) Question asked by Councillor R Ward and addressed to Councillor DS Cope

"Would the portfolio holder inform the Council members of the progress made in carbon reduction and what initiatives are in place for cost saving combined with carbon reduction. Would the portfolio holder also inform the Council members all the costs involved in officer time and whether in these austere times these costs are justified?"

Response from Councillor DS Cope

"The Council has committed to a 20% reduction in the Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) it produces from its own operations by 2014 from a baseline in 2008-09. This is both to show a lead to the community in climate change mitigation and to also to reduce the costs of providing our services. The Council adopted a Carbon

Management Plan in 2009 which helps identify measures to be taken to achieve this target. This plan is currently being refreshed due to the changes in proposals for council buildings and fleet, which will make a significant contribution to ensuring our targets can be met by 2014.

Measures already taken and continuing:

- Hinckley Leisure Centre- Pool covers, variable speed drives for pumps and ventilation fans, low energy lighting upgrades, temperature control changes, staff training
- Reconfigured heating at Middlefield Lane Depot
- Improvement of server rooms reducing server energy demand
- Replacement of leachate pumping station rising main.
- Upgrading of lighting at Sheltered Housing schemes funded through no interest SALIX funding.
- General staff awareness training and campaigns to ensure equipment is turned off.
- Trackers on vehicle fleet, rationalisation of rounds and fuel management, new fleet with better fuel consumption

Actions proposed

- Early move to Hinckley Hub which will have reduced floor space and a high efficiency building, release of Florence House, Depot and Argents Mead.
- Further Salix funded lighting upgrades
- Boiler replacement at Sheltered Housing as required

The Councils overall performance is currently severely affected by the performance of the Hinckley Leisure Centre which is operated by SLM. This single old building produces some 43% of the council's total CO₂ emissions for buildings. The cold winters have increased gas consumption at HLC by over 9% since 2008. Excluding the Leisure Centre the rest of the councils operations have achieved a credible minus 4.4% reduction despite the weather (Minus 8.1% weather corrected) including minus 11.4% in electricity consumption. These reductions equate to a direct saving to this authority of over £51,000 each year and as energy prices continue to rise, reduces additional pressures on the budget.

We currently have 1 fte Officer responsible for co-ordinating our work on environmental matters including reducing CO₂ emissions and we continue to make it "part of the day job" for other staff involved in the procurement or operation of services. This should be regarded as good management of the facilities and services we deliver."

c) Question asked by Councillor PS Bessant and addressed to Councillor SL Bray

"Will the leader inform the Council how many Parish Councils have been consulted by this authority on the Government's 'Planning for Traveller Sites' consultation?"

Response from Councillor SL Bray

"Cllr Bessant. Thank you for your question.

It is not this Council's job to consult on Government Planning Policy but to respond to it. You will however be pleased to note we have ensured that it was forwarded to all Parish Council's on 9 June 2011.

The Government deadline for responses has just been extended until 3 August 2011 and I urge all Parish Councils to make their views known."

d) Question asked by Councillor PS Bessant and addressed to Councillor SL Bray

"Given the uncertainty around the financial split between Borough and Parishes in relation to the New Homes Bonus, what can the leader do to assure local residents that he will do whatever he can to ensure that our communities receive as much benefit from developers as possible?"

The response to this question is provided under the response to e) below.

e) Question asked by Councillor K Morrell and addressed to Councillor SL Bray

"Will the leader inform the Council how much, if any, extra income to date has been generated from the Government's changes to planning around the New Homes Bonus and what has this authority used this extra revenue for?"

Response from Councillor SL Bray to questions d & e

"Cllr Bessant and Cllr Morrell. Thank you for your questions. I've combined my response to address the points you raise on the New Homes Bonus.

You will be aware that the Minister for Housing and Local Government, in February 2011, announced the final design of the New Homes Bonus scheme which he confirmed was to address the disincentive within the local government finance system for local areas to welcome growth. He claimed that the scheme would remove this disincentive by providing local authorities with the means to mitigate the strain the increased population causes. In doing so, he claimed the New Homes Bonus should help engender a more positive attitude to growth, and create an environment in which new housing is more readily accepted.

In simple terms, the way the scheme works is that the Government, through this New Homes Bonus, match the additional Council Tax potential from increases in housing stock created for the following six years. An additional element is included for affordable homes.

This Council was allocated £349,762 New Homes Bonus settlement for 2011/12.

Whilst this is to be welcomed, Members should be aware that there has been a far greater reduction in the Council's RSG settlement for 2011/12 (reduction of £908,250) and 2012/13 (further reduction of £700,331). It is, therefore,

important to consider this in the wider context of the Council budget which underpins service delivery for our communities.

Despite this, I am pleased to confirm that I am considering allocating a proportion of the New Homes Bonus specifically for Parish development initiatives. I have commissioned a report which will be brought to a future meeting of this Council on how this scheme will operate, building on the much valued Parish Initiative Fund that is operated by the Council.

In addition to this, a joint report is being prepared for all Districts in Leicester in conjunction with the County and City Councils linked to developing a Strategy for the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy; a further initiative introduced by the Coalition Government to secure benefits for local residents in communities that accommodate new development. This is important going forward, as there will be further limitations to the extent of planning gain that can be secured through traditional S106 Planning Agreements.

It will be interesting to understand if Leicestershire County Council will be committing a proportion of its share of the Bonus Fund which has been top sliced from the local allocation."

f) Question asked by Councillor JS Moore to Councillor SL Bray

"Will the leader explain why no summer activities for children and young people have been planned for the rural areas this year as in previous years the 'what's going down' initiative was Borough wide? This year the only FREE events are being offered by the County Council library service apart from those taking place in Hinckley so where is the funding coming from to provide these FREE Hinckley events".

Response from Councillor MT Mullaney

"Thank you Cllr Moore, for your question. Despite your pessimism, I can confirm that there is a good range of activities planning for young people across the Borough this summer.

For clarification, the What's Going Down brochure is a partnership publication that relies on the submission of activities throughout the summer from a range of external partners and **not just** HBBC led activities.

It is important to point out that the What's Going Down information that you have seen in the Borough Bulletin is a '*snapshot*' of the activities that are being publicised. As page 9 of the Bulletin states "*The Full Booklet is available to download from www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk from 4 July*", and there are a variety of activities Borough wide, including the rural areas, in the Full Version.

There are over 30 activity schemes promoted in the booklet ranging from half days, morning or afternoon sessions e.g. Desford Tennis Club to comprehensive programmes across four weeks of the summer holidays (Earl Shilton Community House), Barwell Community House is running a five week programme.

Just as an example, projects funded through HBBC's Summer Activities Fund 2011, will be able to view in the full version. A breakdown of localities being supported to put on activities is as follows:-

Parish Area	Organisation	Activity	Grant Received (£)
Desford	Desford Lawn Tennis Club	Junior Tennis Programme	200
Desford	Desford Free Church	Summer Playscheme activities	199
Sheepy magna	Sheepy Magna Memorial hall	Theatre and Drama workshop	200
Hinckley (Wykin)	Red River Theatre / Redmoor High School	Filming and scripting activities	200
Market Bosworth	Market Bosworth Playscheme	Zumba and kickboxing	200
Newbold Verdon and Desford surrounding villages (based at Bosworth College)	Coach Unlimited	Sports Coaching programme	200
Earl Shilton	Earl Shilton Town Council	Play and crafting activities at Shilton by the Sea event	200
Stoke Golding	Lychgate Activity Club	Junior Fishing programme	200
Hinckley (Westfield)	Westfield Junior School	Sports Coaching and Olympic sessions	200
Burbage	Conkers Activity Club	It's a knockout day	200

As we are in an era of reduction in services, ultimately some summer activities for children and young people delivered by our **partners** will be affected. For example the recent restructure of Leicestershire County Councils Youth Service means that this has affected the planning of their Summer Programme. To date we do not have this information and so it will not be possible to promote through the What's Going Down Brochure.

National Play Week Celebrations, which is the FREE Hinckley event that is being referred to is a partnership event with contributions and support from Volunteers, Library Services, Young People, local playschemes, Hinckley and Bosworth Youth Council, SLM and parent help which is coordinated by ourselves (HBBC) on behalf of the Hinckley & Bosworth Play Partnership."

g) Question asked by Councillor Mrs S Sprason and addressed to Councillor SL Bray

"Will the leader update members on the development of 'Extra Care Housing' schemes as Hinckley is the only council in Leicestershire not to have a scheme, this denies older people this preferred choice in the Hinckley and Bosworth area?"

Response from Councillor DS Cope

"Thank you Cllr Sprason for your question. Firstly, can I correct your inaccurate statement. There are currently 5 extra care schemes in the county, in Market Harborough, Melton, Charnwood and Blaby. We are one of three districts, including North West Leicestershire and Oadby and Wigston which currently do not have provision.

The council remains committed to supporting the development of extra care housing and appreciates the contribution it makes to the wellbeing of older people. A bid was made for NHS funding to convert a council sheltered scheme to extra care in 2008 but unfortunately this was unsuccessful. Negotiations have taken place with developers regarding bringing an extra care scheme forward, most recently on the Spa Lane site in Hinckley. On this particular site HCA funding could not be secured to progress the provision.

The council will continue to work with developers, the county council and other funders to identify opportunities for the development of extra care, including consideration of the conversion of our own sheltered accommodation should the opportunities arise."

h) Question asked by Councillor CW Boothby and addressed to the Administration

"Given the incredible budgetary pressures public services are under I am aware the Partnership of which this Authority is a member is looking at the financial shortfall currently existing within the provision of Traffic Enforcement Officers and that this service is currently under review and consultation.

I believe these Enforcement officers provide a valuable service, with Ratby a case in point having just received double yellow lines along Main St and in the village centre. Cllr O'Shea and I negotiated directly to have TEO's patrol in the village to enforce the new traffic regulations.

Would the Administration let Councillors know what actions they as active members of this partnership have taken as part of this consultation process?"

Response from Councillor SL Bray

"Leicestershire County Council (LCC) have advised that they intend to undertake market testing on their on street parking enforcement responsibility. The current arrangements stand until July 2012. Ian Drummond, Assistant Director for Highways at LCC has given a commitment that "no traffic restriction will never be enforced".

Meanwhile the District Councils who currently provide on street enforcement on behalf of the County Council have been working to identify where efficiencies can be made in order that the districts can submit a bid to continue providing this service. This bid will be based on a specification provided by Leicestershire County Council.

The level of enforcement provided for on street enforcement across the county is a decision for the County Council and as such Cllr Boothby is advised to raise this issue with the County Council.”

Agenda item 10(a) – Final Outturn 2010/11 (report C5)

COUNCIL 5 JULY 2011

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE DIRECTION)

RE FINAL OUTTURN 2010/11 (AMENDMENT)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report to Council the financial outturn for 2010/11.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.5 Council approves the carry forward of the Housing Capital underspend set out in paragraph 3.12.

Capital

- 3.12 An additional request has been received to carry forward part of Housing underspend to meet current demand and reduce waiting lists. The requests are:-

£72,000 for Disabled Adaptations on Council Dwellings;
£25,000 to address waiting lists for Electrical Upgrades;
£50,000 to upgrade lifts in Warden Assisted Areas;
£42,500 for Kitchen Upgrades (would reduce the current 5 year waiting list by 6 month).

This will result in additional borrowing of £189,500 attracting an annual revenue interest cost of £9,840 which would have been incurred anyway from financial year 2010/11 if there was no underspend.

Agenda item 10(e) – Overview & Scrutiny End of Term report 2007 – 2011 incorporating Annual Report 2010/11

Deferred to the next meeting of Council.

Agenda item 10(f) – Amendments to Constitution (report C10)

Amendments to appendices:

Page 49, 6.3(d), line 1 - 'and' should read 'an'.

Article 8 (Planning Committee), line 2 – remove 'the authority'.

14.1, line 4 – 'officer' should read 'officers'.

15.2(b) – 'decision' should be 'decisions'.

15.2(c), line 2 – 'ore' should read 'are'.

16.5, line 2 – 'meeting' should be 'meet'.

Agenda item 11 – Calendar of Meetings (report C11)

It is recommended that an additional Finance, Audit & Performance Committee be held on 12 September 2011 in order to consider the Statement of Accounts.

Agenda item 14(a) – Improvement to Recycling Containers

Amended recommendation:

The Council approves:...