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Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

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

Date: 26 November 2024

To: All Members of Council

Dear Councillor,

Please see overleaf a supplementary agenda for the meeting of the **COUNCIL** on **TUESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2024 at 6.30 pm.**

Yours sincerely

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

Rebecca Owen
Democratic Services Manager

COUNCIL - 26 NOVEMBER 2024

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

5. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor will lead this item, including presenting a long service award to a former member of staff.

The Mayor, Councillor Webber-Jones, would like to offer his communications in writing on this occasion:

"I am sorry I cannot be with you this evening. As you may be aware, my work is in education and my institution is having a visit from Ofsted this week. In my absence, the Deputy Mayor has agreed to chair this meeting, and for that I am very grateful.

It has been busy since we last met. The one thing that I am continually humbled by in the office of Mayor is meeting so many wonderful charities, people and organisations, as well as being in awe of the great work our officers do. For example they, along with the Hinckley BID, did a magnificent job with the Christmas lights switch-on and it was a privilege to operate the plunger to turn the lights on this year. I have to say, I think the lights in Argents Mead are a sophisticated and well-received development.

Two days after this event, on 24 November, I saw some wonderful work at the Desford and Peckleton Art Club exhibition. I have represented the borough at a number of events in the past few weeks. On 6 October I attended the Leicestershire Civic Service, on 13 October I attended the High Sherriff's Civic Service, and on 19 October I attended the British Legion Festival of Remembrance at De Montfort Hall. On 8 November I attended a fundraiser for the Chairman of Blaby District Council who is raising money for the Air Ambulance. On 29 October I visited Dovebank Primary School in Nailstone as they are designing my Christmas card for this year which will be out soon. On 31 October I visited Leicester Charity Link to hear about the good work they are doing for those in need in the borough.

In November it was an honour to be part of, and do a reading at, the Remembrance Service in Hinckley. It was poignant to see so many attend the event on 10 November. That evening I attended the Leicestershire multi-faith Festival of Remembrance in Leicester.

On 9 November I opened and visited the Altern-ativity in Hinckley. This event has now been running for many years and is a great way to re-think gifting in the build up to Christmas. I had lots of fun on 26 October at the Saturday Spook-tacular in the Britannia Centre in Hinckley. On 2 November I got to light the bonfire and start the fireworks at the Hinckley Sea Cadets Firework Spectacular. As ever, this was a great family event. During the day on 2 November I went to visit those who are seeking to put up a statue in Hinckley honouring the work and life of Ada Lovelace.

My thanks also go to the Deputy Mayor who, as ever, has been working very hard. On 2 October he attended the Hinckley Toy Appeal launch held at the Salvation Army. On 10 November he undertook the traditional activity of the Remembrance Sunday service and parade in Market Bosworth. On 11 November he attended the Remembrance Day re-dedication of the Toon Clock in Earl Shilton. On 14 November he attended HBBC's Making a Difference awards at Hinckley Rugby Club. The feedback from this event was, once again, excellent. Groups who were there have contacted me to say how good it was so my thanks to everyone involved with this.

I look forward to seeing many of you over the coming weeks at Christmas lights events and Carols Around the Tree. Please do not forget the Civic Carol service on 14 December. There is another date for the diary – I will be holding my charity fundraiser at the Ashby Road Sports Club in Hinckley on 22 February. It will be a fun night for all the family with a quiz, disco, karaoke, a buffet and much more!”

6. **QUESTIONS**

Question received from Councillor R Allen:

“As I am sure the Leader is aware, 8 May 2025 is the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day. Can he assure members that this authority will offer financial assistance and practical support to any of the borough’s parishes and towns to assist them in ensuring this important anniversary is marked in a manner befitting its importance in our country’s history please?”

Response from the Leader of Council:

“The Borough Council looks forward to celebrating this anniversary next year.

It is important to remember when considering any new funding requests that the council has lost £10million in funding since 2016.

However, to act as a catalyst and to encourage borough-wide engagement in this poignant anniversary, there will be an opportunity to request a small amount of event-day funds via the council, on a first-come-first-served basis.

The council’s events team will be providing support and guidance to those parishes and towns who ask.

I hope that the County Council will also be supportive by waiving fees etc for any road closures that may be required and trust that Councillor Allen will pursue that with his colleagues.”

8. **LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S POSITION STATEMENT**

“Welcome to this last meeting of Council before Christmas.

You will note we have five key items of business on the agenda tonight. The first relates to recommendations of the Licensing Committee regarding our requirements under the Gambling Act 2005. The second regards renewing a lease for an existing popular short stay car park in the town centre. I’m please we also have the annual report of the Scrutiny Commission, which highlights the incredibly good work of the Commission.

In addition, we have a report and recommendations of the Ethical Governance and Personnel Committee, followed by a report to be considered in private session on the Council depot.

I have included a few key updates below.

Devolution

Members will recall from my last Leader’s Statement that we are awaiting a new government white paper on devolution. This is expected imminently and is something I will be discussing later in December with my district Leader and Chief

Executive colleagues. I have advised officers that I would like the Scrutiny Commission and Council to formally consider the draft response to the long-awaited devolution framework for England.

I would like to clarify a matter that has recently hit the headlines in the Municipal Journal which suggested that ministers were poised to scrap districts. We understand that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in response to an approach by the Time newspaper has confirmed “this is not true... districts play a crucial role and there are no plans to scrap them”.

This is welcome news. We know councils like ours are so much closer to our communities and businesses who identify with our place and the services we provide. We know we are well placed and have the powers to promote economic development, deliver much needed new housing for our communities and support our town centres and high streets. We are the most trusted part of local government and are effective at delivering services in the right places for our communities.

Whilst I welcome the opportunity of more powers and resources being devolved nationally, this should not be at the expense of seeing local government boundaries and structure changing in areas where there is little support and lack of key evidence over the benefits versus impact on our communities.

As I said at the last Council meeting, it is the government’s express desire for every area of the country to have devolution deals with the opportunity for new powers and resources linked to the government’s ambition for economic growth. It is therefore vitally important that we are at the table locally and nationally in those discussions to ensure we secure the best deal for our local communities. I will update members on the outcome of my discussions following my meeting with leaders in December.

National insurance changes

At her recent budget, the Chancellor made a number of changes to employer national insurance contributions. Officers tell me that this will impact on our budget in the region of £300,000 which we will need to find by making savings or increasing taxes. I have Raised with both the District Councils Network and the Local Government Association about the potential impact this will have on local government and specifically Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council. I have asked that both organisations lobby the government to mitigate these changes, as if they don’t, this will add even more pressure to our financial situation.

Success in tackling shop lifting in Hinckley town centre

I’m pleased to report that our work with the local police and Hinckley BID, together with other local partners and businesses, is having a positive impact on tackling crime in Hinckley town centre.

The use of retail radios, the DISC system (which allows timely sharing of information between police, our CCTV team and businesses), town centre policing

and our CCTV system working closely with businesses, has yielded excellent results with arrests and property recovered.

We know this is a busy shopping period leading up to Christmas and we will continue to work closely with partners to ensure residents and visitors have the best and safest experience when visiting the town.

Remembrance Sunday

I recently attended the annual Remembrance Sunday service in Hinckley, led by the vicar of St Mary's Church, Reverend Ian Hill, held at the Argents Mead war memorial. Clergy and church members of different denominations, as well as the Royal British Legion and veteran groups, civic leader, representatives of the Guides, scouting and cadet organisations all contributed to the moving service and to the parade.

A big thank you to the Mayor, his consorts, local members and residents who came to give their respect to honour the fallen in the first and second world wars and subsequent conflicts. Also, to provide my thanks to all who supported remembrance events across the borough and particularly to our staff who helped support the events.

Spearheading campaigns to reduce litter on the A5

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our staff in Street Scene Services and my colleague Councillor Lynda Hodgkins for their work in coordinating a campaign with councils across the region, supported by National Highways, to reduce littering along the A5.

This was recognised by partners and members at last week's A5 Partnership meeting, hosted by Rugby Borough Council. This is a great credit to our managers and staff within Street Scene Services who do a fantastic job in keeping our streets and public spaces clean.

Hinckley parks – finest in the UK

I'm delighted to report that Hollycroft Park users across the country have voted Hinckley's Hollycroft Park as one of the most impressive green spaces in the 2024 People's Choice Awards – a top ten park in the country.

I have previously reported that both Hollycroft Park and Argents Mead were awarded the much-coveted Green Flag award for 2024 – a prestigious accolade that is only awarded to the very best parks and green spaces in the country.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to our green spaces team and our dedicated "Friends of Hollycroft" volunteers.

National planning awards

Staying on the theme of awards, I reported earlier this year of the great success of

our planning team for winning the 'Planning Team of the Year' in the East Midlands Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) regional awards.

Tonight, our planning team led by Sharon Stacey, our Director of Communities and Environment, and Chris Brown, our Head of Planning, are attending the national RTPI awards ceremony in London as finalists in the category of 'best planning team of the year'. I hope you will all join me in wishing the team every success in securing the award. This gives recognition to the incredible work they have done in turning around the performance of the service.

Business networking event

We recently facilitated a major business networking event hosted at MIRA Technology Institute. Speakers included Bill Cullen, our Chief Executive, Phoebe Davison, the CEO of the new Leicestershire Business and Skills Partnership, Marion Plant, CEO and Principal of North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College and representatives of MIRA Department of International Trade and Federation of Small Businesses. The event was attended by over 70 key local businesses from across the borough and the feedback has been extremely positive.

We plan to do further events going forward into the new year.

Making a Difference Awards

Earlier this month we convened our annual Making a Difference Awards at Hinckley Rugby Club. These awards, sponsored by the Borough Council, recognise and celebrate the contribution that volunteers make in strengthening the communities and improving the quality of life of residents.

In this 50th anniversary year of the Council, it was fantastic to see the incredible achievements of those who have volunteered for over 50 years, together with those who are just starting out on their volunteering journey.

I would like to express my thanks to my colleague Councillor Michael Mullaney for supporting and compering the event and our staff for organising and ensuring the event was a success – also a big thank you to Hinckley Rugby Club for hosting us.

Our Let's Get Moving Awards 2024

Working with our partners, Hinckley & Bosworth's Local Sport and Health Alliance (LSHA) are about to launch its nominations process for the Active Awards 2024 to recognise all the hard work individuals, sports clubs, volunteers, organisations and schools have undertaken to help others keep active and healthy.

This is a great opportunity to thank someone, or a sports club, organisation or school for their support and to recognise and celebrate their hard work this year.

Details of how to nominate will be published in our forthcoming edition of the Borough Bulletin and on our website. The closing date for nominations will be

Tuesday, 31 December 2024. Those nominated will be invited to an awards ceremony to be held at Hinckley Rugby Club on Thursday, 30 January 2025.

Christmas events

I was delighted to attend this year's Christmas lights switch-on in Hinckley town centre on Friday night, which was enjoyed by thousands of residents. Thank you to our Mayor, his consorts and cadets and our special guest star Bethany Asher, star of the BBC One drama Sherwood, and also to Fosse 107 who compered the event.

Our Christmas light spectacular in Argents Mead was a new addition this year, which proved really popular. Residents and visitors can look forward to enjoying the following over the festive period:

- Festive music on 7, 14 and 21 December in Argents Mead
- Hinckley Market at Christmas on Friday 20, Saturday 21 and Monday 23 December, plus Friday 27, Saturday 28 and Monday 30 December
- Carols Around the Tree on Friday, 13 December at 4.15pm to 5.00pm
- Festive Feast and Craft market on Sunday, 10 December 10.00am to 4.00pm
- Christmas lights car trail on 8 December 6.00pm to 8.00pm
- Hinckley BID's festive fund on 21 December, featuring Santa's Grotto at the Birdie Bunker and festive live music at the Britannia Centre, including a performance by students and staff from the Hinckley campus of North Warwickshire & South Leicestershire College.

Also, look out on our website for the various parish events taking place across the Borough including the Market Bosworth Christmas lights switch-on on Sunday, 1 December at 2.00pm to 8.00pm (lights switched on at 5.00pm).

Free Christmas car parking

I'm pleased to confirm that Christmas shopping in Hinckley will be given a boost. Once again, we are offering free car parking in a range of town centre car parks on Saturdays in the run up to Christmas. This will commence from Saturday, 30 November.

I would like to urge our residents to support their local high streets, markets and hospitality venues if they can.

13. MOTIONS RECEIVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 17

Motion proposed by Councillor R Allen, seconded by Councillor C Allen:

"Hinckley and Bosworth is a rural borough, with many family owned and operated farming businesses.

The announcements in the recent Labour budget pose an existential threat to the continuance of these family businesses that have historically passed from generation to generation.

This motion proposes Council notes that:

The recent 2024 autumn budget change to inheritance tax relief announced by the Labour Government will introduce a family farm tax, which will have a devastating impact on family farms and farmers' ability to pass on their farms to the next generation of farmers.

A study by the Farm Safety Foundation found that 95% of farmers under the age of 40 rank poor mental health as the biggest hidden problem they face today, with farmers working in an industry recognised as having high rates of suicide.

Council believes that:

- The Labour Government has committed a shameful betrayal and let down farmers by breaking its promise to not introduce a family farm tax. Only last year, Secretary of State Steve Reed said: "We have no intention of changing APR (Agricultural Property Relief)".
- At last year's NFU conference, Sir Keir Starmer stated that "losing a farm is not like losing any other business, it can't come back". He was absolutely right, it can't. And neither can its ability to produce food for the nation.
- The family farm tax will damage the ability of farmers to pass on their farms to the next generation.
- Labour's family farm tax will threaten food security by forcing the sale of family farms.
- Numerous rural and farming organisations such as the National Farmers Union and Country Land and Business Association have warned that countless farms will be harmed, threatening food security, progress on measures to tackle climate change, and the rural way of life.
- The comments made by Secretary of State Steve Reed that already struggling farmers will have to "do more with less" are deplorable.
- At a time when many farmers in Hinckley & Bosworth are struggling with soaring costs and energy prices, this sudden tax rise will endanger the future of their farms.

Council resolves:

1. To request that the Chief Executive of HBBC writes to the Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to outline the Council's dismay at this decision and calls on the Government to reverse its decision to impose family farm tax.
2. That this Council engages with local farmers and community representatives to assess what measures and actions Council can take to support them.
3. That a list must be published by Government of affected farms in Hinckley & Bosworth, Leicestershire and nationally so that the extent of the impact of these proposals can be fully demonstrated and appreciated."

The following amendment will be proposed by Councillor Bray and seconded by Councillor Cope:

"That an additional bullet point be included at the top of the list of points, to read:

Council believes that:

- The last conservative government, backed by local conservative MPs, crashed the economy, left a huge black hole and damaged public services

That an additional bullet point be added to the end of the list of points, to read:

- The conservative County Council's policies to sell off a number of county farms in the Borough is threatening the livelihoods of local farmers and threatening food production locally."

That the words "and HM Treasury" be inserted in point 1 under "Council resolves" to read:

1. To request that the Chief Executive of HBBC writes to the Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and HM Treasury to outline the Council's dismay at this decision and calls on the government to reverse its decision to impose family farm tax.

That an additional recommendation be added to read:

4. To condemn the County Council's plans to sell off its county farms and to call on the county councillors representing Hinckley and Bosworth to vote to reverse this during the forthcoming budget process."

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