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Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

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

Date: 28 January 2025

To: All Members of Council

Dear Councillor,

Please see overleaf a supplementary agenda for the meeting of the **COUNCIL** on **TUESDAY, 28 JANUARY 2025** at **6.30 pm**.

Yours sincerely

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

Rebecca Owen
Democratic Services Manager

COUNCIL - 28 JANUARY 2025

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

5. **MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

To receive such communications as the Mayor may decide to lay before the Council.

6. **QUESTIONS**

To deal with questions under Council Procedure Rule number 14.

(a) **Question from Councillor Surtees to the Executive member for Finance**

“From the Statement of Accounts 2023/24 update presented to Audit Committee on 15 January 2025, it can be noted that long term assets, current assets, net assets, cash and cash equivalents and total reserves have all reduced significantly as at 31 March 2024 compared to 31 March 2023. Can the Executive member for Finance provide an explanation for the changes in all of these key figures and provide a list of all assets whose value has decreased including their value as at 31 March 2023 versus their value as at 31 March 2024?”

Response from Councillor Lynch:

“Long term assets

Long term assets are the council's property, plant and equipment, and the overall value has gone down by about 1% from £320m to £317m, which is not really significant on a property holding of that size. The reasons, as explained by officers on the night of the Audit Committee, were due to a mix of disposals, depreciation and revaluations, all of which are explained in note 11 to the accounts. In short, that note informs the reader that there were £10.8m of additions, £9.6m of revaluations and £3.1m of disposals, also £1.2m of net depreciation movements, which gives the £m movement.

Current assets

The current assets section of the balance sheet covers all working capital from short term investment to provisions, so there are many areas of change one year to another. The main single change was that short term investments had moved from £14m to £7m. This is due to the timing of cash receipts and payments, but as we need to borrow and repay loans it is expected that there may be less to invest. It has been reported to members that we are under-borrowed and will need to begin to borrow as cash comes under pressure for having to repay HRA debt and cope with increasing expenditure pressure. Also, investment and borrowing activity is reported to Finance & Performance Scrutiny quarterly, so those reports may help with the understanding of the position should they be read.

Net assets

Net assets is the sum of all the items on the balance sheet, but the above

comments on property, plant and equipment and working capital cover some of it. One of the other main movements is in relation to “other long term liabilities” which went from £8.1m to £26.6m on the balance sheet. This is covered in note 36 to the accounts and is mainly caused by the “asset ceiling actuarial adjustment”, which is a technical adjustment based on actuarial calculations. This relates to the present value of any economic benefits available from refunds from the plan or reductions in future contributions to the plan. Quite a technical accounting amendment which is not unusual for pension calculations, as they are based on actuarial estimates that have many complex considerations to go over when valuing the longer terms liabilities of our share of the pension fund.

Cash and cash equivalents

The notes to the accounts 24, 25 and 26 give the detail of movements in the cashflow. As noted above, there are changes merely to do with the timing of payments and receipts and when amounts are needed. The balance sheet is a snapshot in time on a single day, but also noted above is the explanation that cashflows are under a little more pressure, which will reduce the amount available to place in investments. As there was £127m placed in investments and £135m coming back in from investments during 2023/24, the timing of placements and cashflow around the year end is quite key to the movement.

Total reserves

This reflects the values of the factors that have affected the reset of the balance sheet that produce movements in the reserves, hence the movement on total reserves matches the movement on total assets. However, a detailed analysis of the movements is in the “movement in reserves statement” in the accounts and its linked note 6 of the accounts.

List of all assets whose value has decreased including their value as at 31 March 2023 versus their value as at 31 March 2024

The main reduction comes from the change in valuation of our housing stock, which is not valued at open market value but at a discount so is at “market value subject to tenancy”. This means it gets valued downward from market value to about 42% of its open market value. Therefore dwellings are the main area of reduction in value as per the accounts. The relevant note from the accounts is given below and shows a £12m downward valuation in council dwellings.”

2023/24	Council Dwellings	Other Land and Buildings	Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	Community Assets	Infrastructure Assets	Assets under Construction *	Total
Cost or Valuation	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
As at 1 April 2023	250,598	56,269	13,934	5,457	832	2,072	329,162
Asset Transfers/Reclassifications	0	94	0	0	0	-94	0
Transfer to Asset held for Sale	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Additions	9,648	85	695	211	0	164	10,803
Revaluation Increases/(Decreases)							
- Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	-12,006	2,510	0	0	0	0	-9,496
- Recognised in Provision of Services	-122	-455	0	0	0	0	-577
Derecognition / Disposals	-966	0	0	0	0	-2,142	-3,108
As at 31 March 2024	247,152	58,503	14,629	5,668	832	0	326,784
Depreciation and Impairments							
As at 1 April 2023	0	0	-8,355	0	-402	0	-8,757
Transfer of Depreciation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Depreciation charge	-3,792	-772	-937	0	-31		-5,532
Depreciation written out to							
- The Revaluation Reserve	3,714	623	0	0	0	0	4,337
- The Provision of Services	78	149	0	0	0	0	227
As at 31 March 2024	0	0	-9,292	0	-433	0	-9,725
Net Book Value at 31 March 2024	247,152	58,503	5,337	5,668	399	0	317,059

(b) **Question from Councillor C Allen to the Executive member for Planning**

“Can the Executive member for Planning please confirm:

- A. The current number of applications at or past their decision date split by major and minor applications
- B. The current status of the Local Plan, and that this Council remains on track to fully adopt its new Local Development Plan by March 2026?”

Response from Councillor Crooks:

- “A. Total planning applications over eight weeks = 79. Of these 79 applications, 36 are major applications, however will also likely have an agreement in place on timescale to the point of a decision. The remaining 43 are minor applications. In the past 12 months, 83% of major applications and 86% of minor applications have been processed within time, both well ahead of government targets of 60% and 70% respectively.
- B. The Council consulted on a Regulation 18 draft Local Plan in summer 2024. Since this time, a new National Planning Policy Framework has been consulted on and then published, including revised housing targets published in December. New housing targets, an increase of 50% from 433 dwellings per annum to 649 dwellings per annum, are being reviewed and legal advice is being taken with regard to next steps. The Council has to update its Local Development Scheme and submit this to MHCLG by 6 March 2025, setting out the timescale to adoption.”

(c) **Question from Councillor R Allen to the Leader of Council**

“Can the Leader of Council please confirm when members will receive a copy of the peer review report and also how and when that document will be publicly available (ie will it be published on the council’s website)?”

Response from Councillor Bray:

“It’s a shame that Councillor Allen didn’t attend the extremely positive feedback session given by the LGA team.

We were advised by the LGA Peer Manager that the target was for the report to be published by the end of March 2025 and due to the Christmas break there would be a delay in us receiving a draft of the report. I am aware the Chief Executive is presenting the outcomes from the peer review this Thursday at the Scrutiny Commission, which you might wish to attend.”

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

“Welcome to this first full Council meeting of 2025. Given recent national government announcements and publications, it promises to be a particularly challenging and turbulent few years ahead.

On tonight’s agenda we have the Audit Committee annual report for 2023/24, and a report reviewing the terms of reference of the Audit Committee following the committee’s self-assessment last year and recommendations of the LGA corporate peer challenge that took place in December 2024. A significant item on the agenda tonight is the report of the Chief Executive on the Devolution White Paper, which we can discuss and debate accordingly.

We also have an important motion on the government budget changes announced in the autumn of 2024 regarding changes to inheritance tax relief on family run farms.

I have set out below some other key updates.

Events

I am extremely pleased to report that the 2024 events season was a huge success, exceeding the previous year’s performance on impact and outcomes. The number of residents and visitors attending our popular events resulted in an increase in footfall of 62% compared with the previous year’s figures. This is great in terms of attracting residents from across the borough and neighbouring areas and helps support and sustain our centres across the borough.

Within Hinckley town centre, and across many of our market towns and villages, we saw residents come out in large numbers to support Christmas events and Christmas light switch-on extravaganzas. In Hinckley, our new Christmas light trail in Argents Mead proved a fantastic hit with residents, attracting over 27,000 people.

I would like to put on record my sincere thanks to our staff in Cultural Services, Community Safety and Streetscene Services who ensured our events were delivered so well, keeping visitors safe and keeping our places clean following the clean-up operations afterwards.

You will be pleased to know we are currently at the planning stages for our 2025/26 events calendar which will ensure we deliver and support a variety of events for our communities across the borough.

Expanding our partnerships at the Hinckley Hub

I am pleased to say works are planned to commence on 3 February on the ground floor of the Hinckley Hub to accommodate our NHS partners, with the delivery of a new physiotherapy clinic. The works are due for completion in July to facilitate the opening of the physiotherapy centre.

Flooding and extreme weather events

If anyone needed to be reminded of the importance of reducing the world's carbon emissions, the recent extreme weather events nationally and locally are testament to the need for action around climate change. Just 12 months ago we felt the effect of Storm Henk, it is now happening again including Storms Darragh and Eowyn. We experienced the effects after Christmas of Storm Darragh with the extreme flooding that occurred across Leicestershire. Our borough was not immune from this, with Witherley being the worst affected place locally. I would like to express my thanks to our team in Streetscene Services who undertook the clean-up afterwards. It is time that the government understood the devastating impacts that flooding has on homes and businesses in our area.

Tackling fly tipping

You may have seen recently the publicity over the success the Council has had in securing fines through the magistrates courts for individuals who have been found to be fly tipping in Ratby and Hinckley. I hope this serves as a warning to all those individuals who consider fly tipping to be acceptable and who have total disregard for their neighbours and communities.

Impact of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

On 12 December 2024 the government published an updated NPPF, and with it updated local housing need numbers for each local planning authority across the country. These nationally set housing targets are based on meeting the government target of 1.5m homes over the current parliamentary term. This has resulted in significant increases to the borough in terms of land to be provided for additional new homes.

So, what are the implications for HBBC? Prior to 12 December our housing target was 433 houses per year. With this target we could demonstrate a five-year housing land supply of 5.6 years, which is a key national consideration in all planning applications. However, from 12 December this target has increased by

50% to now being 649 houses per year. This sudden and significant increase in our housing target means that we can no longer demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. We are therefore again subject to further speculative applications as a result of the government led action to increase our housing target. The overall impact over the next 15 or so years is that we need to ensure delivery of an additional 4,500 houses, above the current draft new Local Plan target.

Local Plan – Regulation 18 consultation

Members will be aware that the Council consulted on its Regulation 18 draft Local Plan over the summer, from 31 July to 27 September 2024. This draft plan included a plan for up to 14,000 new homes and indicated a number of proposed strategic site allocations to help meet the target. Over 800 responses were received to this consultation. Over 50% of the responses were from members of the public, with responses also received from landowners, developers, planning agents and statutory consultees.

Of note are the comments of Leicestershire County Council. It states “there are a number of significant factors, some of which are beyond either the local transport authorities or district council’s control that affect the Local Plan from a transport perspective”. It also highlights to us major uncertainties of the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange (HNRFI) scheme, with this now delayed by the Secretary of State for Transport until March for a decision, and the key uncertainty of the A5, particularly regarding future impact on two junctions.

The County Council concludes its Regulation 18 response by saying that it is “not presently in a position to say that the Local Plan would be sound from a transport perspective”. Our officers will continue to work to try and provide some certainty to these issues identified, to allow the Local Plan to progress. This includes our officers working with Leicestershire County Council, Warwickshire County Council and National Highways to resolve these issues. In addition, the Council will continue to lobby hard via the A5 Partnership to secure much needed investment in improvements on the stretch of A5 between Hinckley and Tamworth. This has secured priority status in the work undertaken by Midlands Connect, the strategic transport body of the Midlands.

What all of this adds up to is that these matters are not within the control of this Council. Instead, the Secretary of State prolonging the rail freight process to March 2025, and potentially longer, and no current certainty over the government’s emerging Route Investment 3 for 2025 to 2030, all leaves us without any clarity and certainty as to what traffic impact will result and whether there will be a government investment in the A5. This has resulted in all three relevant highway authorities currently objecting to development proposals that feed onto the Longshoot and Dodwells junctions on the A5.

This Council has set out its plans to deliver new housing and employment growth for the borough in its Regulation 18 Local Plan to 2041. However, this process is clearly being elongated by matters outside of the council’s control, with reliance on other parties to ensure that we can make progress.

Implications regarding Leicestershire councils' response to Charnwood Local Plan

Linked to progression of our Local Plan, our officers are engaged with all other Leicestershire councils with regards to cross-boundary matters and wider strategic planning, therefore the experience gleaned from following the progress of the Charnwood Local Plan is important. This plan was submitted to the government for examination in December 2022. Following three separate hearing sessions over the course of two plus years, Leicestershire County Council resolved at its Cabinet in October 2024 to object to the Charnwood Local Plan based on how highway infrastructures would be delivered. This has resulted in Charnwood Borough Council having to look to introduce a new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule in order to progress its Local Plan, resulting in further delays in its progress. Charnwood BC is now not expecting to adopt its Local Plan until later this year, nearly three years on from submission.

This change in stance on infrastructure delivery will result in Charnwood being the only planning authority in the county with CIL, and with all other planning authorities, including HBBC, expected to follow suit. This clearly introduces further uncertainty and delay to all Local Plan progress in the county and arguably will continue to delay and frustrate the delivery of new housing and employment development across Leicestershire.

Art exhibitions at the Atkins Building

There is still time to go along to the Atkins Building, Hinckley, to see the work of students from North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College, which finishes this Friday, 31 January. I am pleased to confirm from next month the creative arts teaching team from the college will run a "collaborative" themed exhibition to showcase the creative arts facilities available at the Hinckley campus. This will run from Monday, 10 February to Friday, 21 February. Details can be found on the Atkins Building's website.

Crime and antisocial behaviour

We are keen to hear the views of residents across the borough on crime and antisocial behaviour in their area. Our survey closing date is 31 January. The survey is available on the Council's website. The input received from residents and businesses will help shape the prevention work undertaken across Leicestershire.

Anti-littering poster competition winners announced

Following a borough-wide competition, nine local children will have their anti-littering posters displayed across Hinckley and Bosworth and online in 2025. The winning entries will be made into large format posters with the competition split into two categories – ages four to seven and ages seven to 11. Staff at the Borough Council were delighted to receive so many fantastic entries and have picked two winners. However, with the competition being so close, runners-up have been chosen, and their posters will also be shared across the Council's social media channels.

Music in the Mead 2025

Following last year's highly successful summer season of music we are delighted to announce that another season of free concerts will take place at the bandstand in Argents Mead this summer. Visitors can look forward to the return of some highly popular groups and bands.

Big bin for business launched

Our big bin collection service is being launched for business owners who have "too much waste for the tip and not enough for a skip". We will deliver a large four-wheeled bin to businesses and collect it six days later for a small charge. It can be booked for either refuse or garden waste and can be either a 660-litre bin or a 1100-litre bin. Extra recycling bins, textile bags and a bag for small electrical items will also be included in the price. The big bin clear-out collection service is available on Tuesdays for Hinckley and Burbage and on Wednesdays for the rest of the Borough.

Sad news

It is with great sadness I must inform you of the death of Helen Grimes who was a Customer Service Advisor in the Council's Customer Services team. Helen was 38 years old and had worked for this Council for 19 years but, following a short illness, sadly passed away over the Christmas period. Our condolences go to Helen's family, friends and work colleagues.

Also may we remember Ann Hall, a long standing Borough and Burbage Parish Councillor, who recently passed away. Ann served as a borough councillor between 2007 and 2015 and was a founding member and past chairman of Burbage Parish Council, serving 30 years as a parish councillor for the Lash Hill area.

12. DEVOLUTION WHITE PAPER

To brief members on the key features and implications of the government's English Devolution White Paper, to confirm the council's position and next steps, and to recommend delegation of authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of Council to undertake any work required to facilitate an effective response to the White Paper.

In moving the report, the Leader will move the following additional recommendations:

- (i) This Council resolves to oppose the imposition of a large, remote and inaccessible mega-council in Leicestershire and instructs the Leader and Chief Executive to continue to fight these plans;
- (ii) Should the government be determined to press ahead with local government reorganisation, then the Council believes a single Leicestershire-wide council would be the worst option for Hinckley and

Bosworth residents. Smaller unitary councils based on a group of similar existing districts would be more accessible and mean decisions taken closer to local residents;

- (iii) The government has indicated that reorganisation will lead to an enhanced role for town and parish councils. Hinckley is presently the only unparished part of the Borough. The Council therefore requests officers to bring forward at pace proposals to create a town council for Hinckley which the Council will consult Hinckley residents on.