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**Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council**

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

Date: 21 February 2019

To: All Members of Council

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Dear Councillor,

Please see overleaf a Supplementary Agenda for the meeting of the **COUNCIL** on **THURSDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2019** at **6.30 pm**.

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Owen
Democratic Services Officer

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

8. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S POSITION STATEMENT

Our meeting this evening is very much about the budget, but there are a number of points which I wish to also report to members this evening and I'll address those first.

I had the pleasure recently to meet with the Secretary of State for Health, Matt Hancock, on his brief visit to Hinckley. The visit took place at Hinckley District Hospital and was an opportunity to discuss in more detail how the £8m investment announced in December will benefit the local health services and increase the care we can provide more locally within Hinckley and Bosworth.

I also had the opportunity to brief him on the joint prevention work that this council does with health to reduce the burden on the NHS, and to outline our desire to support more of this work and the social prescribing ambitions that he has recently announced.

The investment in Hinckley supports plans for the transition to a much more patient-centred approach to care which focusses on providing modern, fit for purpose facilities to support more services in the local community, and closer to home. It is fantastic news for local people.

Some buildings and facilities which are not fit for purpose will be upgraded and improved facilities will ensure that the local health service can provide the highest standards of care quite rightly expected by local people.

The plans focus on making better use of all available existing space in Hinckley Health Centre (Hill Street,) and at Hinckley and Bosworth Community Hospital (Sunnyside) by:

- refurbishing Hinckley Health Centre, to accommodate X-ray/ultrasound, physiotherapy and an increased number of consulting rooms;
- creating a combined day case surgery and endoscopy unit with day-case beds, which will provide an increased range of day case procedures and cancer screening services for local patients; and
- relocating the out-of-hours primary care service from Hinckley and Bosworth Community Hospital into the new developed urgent care hub in Hinckley Health Centre providing out-of-hours urgent care for local patients.

I shall continue to give the NHS and local CCG my full support with these plans as they seek to modernise healthcare in our Borough.

The date of Brexit is looming and whilst we still do not know the outcome of MPs' deliberations it is clear that the majority believe that the 'no-deal' option should be avoided. This is very much the case with business leaders locally, many of whom would much prefer to remain within the single market. This council, along with other agencies, continues to make preparations for Brexit in whatever form it takes.

Since our last Council meeting I have continued discussions with Leicestershire LLEP in an attempt to reach agreement on the use of the retained growth in business rates from MIRA Technology Park.

However at their board meeting on 5 February 2019, the LLEP Board was recommended, and approved to:-

Suspend investment in MIRA Technology Park (MTP) EZ on the basis that HBBC's position is not consistent with that of CBC and LCC as the billing authorities for the Loughborough and Leicester EZ. Without an agreement with HBBC, investment in the MTP EZ is in effect already suspended.

The Board was further asked to consider the following options, which the Board also approved:-

- i. The LLEP seeks legal advice regarding the dispute with HBBC.
- ii. The LLEP considers the implications of seeking formal intervention by the Secretary of State regarding the dispute with HBBC.
- iii. Suspension of any future funding decisions within HBBC.
- iv. The LLEP notifies MIRA that no further investment can be made in the MTP EZ due to the withholding of funds by HBBC.

These later options were presented in a written paper only at the board meeting.

I know that for several years now LLEP has withheld vital funding to MTP whilst we attempt to reach agreement on the LLEP share of the business rates uplift, and despite an offer by HBBC to be pragmatic on initial percentage splits, it has not been possible to reach agreement.

I believe this is contrary to the very purpose of the LLEP but I have advised MTP of this decision, and will now progress further discussions in accordance with the position agreed by Council in September.

At our recent Together for Tenants meeting there was a presentation by Leicestershire County Council on proposals for 'A new council for Leicestershire'. Tenants had requested the presentation and as we know the proposals lack any substance around how a new authority would operate council housing, and there is no detail to support where the suggested savings would come from. Tenants were rightly concerned that LCC representatives could not explain what assumptions had been used as the basis for cost savings, particularly when it came to two points.

Firstly would a new council sell all of its housing stock to a housing association?

Secondly what would be the impact on rents, which some feared could be increased by up to 30% under any proposals to move to a housing association?

I have reassured our tenants that under the stewardship of HBBC they do not need to worry about their homes being sold to another organisation, nor do they need to worry about rents being increased by 30%. In fact with the budget this evening they will have seen rents on average reduced over the past four years by over £150 per household, and their rents will be almost £500 per year less than if the planned increases of the previous administration had been implemented.

Myself and the Chief Executive recently attended the DCN spring conference, where amongst other speakers the Secretary of State for Local Government reiterated his position on proposals for new unitary authorities. No new proposals will be considered under current legislation unless they have unanimous support, and they will not be considered as a means of managing budgets.

This to me is a very clear position, however the Secretary of State also said that when the current legislation expires next month he would publish a framework for devolution which will include guidance on inviting proposals for unitary structures and other collaborative

arrangements.

I believe the Secretary of State should consider any such requests to be around credible communities rather than credible geography, and that in the East Midlands a wholesale re-vamp of the structure of local government should only be considered in the future as part of a devolution deal for the region.

Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange proposals are causing increasing concern for local residents and I have attended some further meetings with external groups as well as our own internal working party. This will be a very protracted process before any real decisions are made but it is clear that the concerns for peoples' health from air, light and noise pollution, the physical and environmental damage to Burbage Common, lack of rail capacity, and potential horrendous road disruptions are the major concerns that need to be understood by those who will deal with the planning application.

Having seen recent documents promoted by the opposition we are now clearly into election silly season with warnings for example of the impending closure of Cineworld. I do want to assure members that any sale of our part of The Crescent will not result in the closure of the cinema. Other parts of the development have been sold, and they too did not lead to the closure of Sainsbury's. I do wonder with the opposition's proposals to reverse that decision how they will plan to fund the crematorium and other investments in community facilities in our borough, or will those projects be stopped also?

Finally this evening we will present our fourth budget of this term in office. It is noticeably different from the one we inherited four years ago.

It is a budget which delivers for local people, and particularly those most in need of our support.

It is a budget which invests in our staff and which delivers the pay rises we promised.

It is a budget which is balanced and meets the more stringent financial controls that we implemented a few years ago.

It is a budget which invests in our town centres, in our rural communities, and in local businesses.

It is a budget which invests in our IT and telephony systems to provide better service to our customers.

It is a budget which supports our strategy to do more for young people, to improve standards of housing, to support all communities and everyone in them, those who volunteer to help others, or those who just want to improve their surroundings.