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**Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council**

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

Date: 17 September 2020

To: All Members of Council

Dear Councillor,

Please see overleaf a Supplementary Agenda for the meeting of the **COUNCIL** on **TUESDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2020 at 6.30 pm.**

Yours sincerely

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

Rebecca Owen
Democratic Services Manager

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

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

Madam Mayor and Members you will note from the agenda tonight that we continue to be impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Our latest projections on the financial implications are included in the Financial Outturn report. Even in these difficult times it is good to see we are still making positive progress on key priorities. You will be considering the latest progress report on the multi-million pound investment on Ambion Court, a new sheltered scheme in Market Bosworth. We also have on the agenda, in private session, a report that will help accelerate future investment in MIRA Technology Park to help boost jobs and employment locally.

I set out below some other key matters that I want to update you all on.

LCC's Unitary Position

You will have all seen the report that LCC has published for consideration by its Cabinet this week, seeking to gain support for the County Leader to write to Government requesting an invitation for the submission of a proposal for the establishment of unitary local government in Leicestershire.

I am not sure what planet the leadership of LCC are on but, whilst the rest of the country is concerned over the COVID crisis and economic recovery, they continue to spend time and resource on a vanity project about structures. I will repeat what I have said before - our residents and businesses support this Council and what it does. We provide vital services to our community, we empty their bins, provide affordable housing, tackle ASB, ensure our residents stay safe and well by inspecting food establishments, maintain our parks and support our economy and our high streets, provide great leisure facilities and put on great events and support our vulnerable and much more - all at the lowest council tax rate in the county!

I will continue to fight to retain these vital services for our residents and for them to be delivered by this Council and not a much larger organisation that is remote from our residents and communities. We should all be focussed on economic recovery and supporting our residents and businesses through this crisis and not be diverted on bureaucratic nonsense.

I therefore call on all Members of all parties of this Council to play their part in challenging LCC's position on this.

We will obviously have the opportunity more formally to respond to the Devolution and Recovery White Paper when it is published, which we expect to be late October or early November and can debate this matter further.

COVID Impact - Events

You will have picked up last week that further restrictions are in place on social gatherings and social distancing requirements. It is therefore, with understandable disappointment, we are not able to run some of our key events in the way we intended this year. We are, however, taking every opportunity to do things virtually, as far as is possible.

Free Town Centre Car Parking

During the Leicester October half term a range of discount initiatives are being proposed by retailers supported by the Hinckley BID. I am pleased to confirm this Council will be supporting this initiative by extending free car parking all day at a number of our key town centre car parks which are already offering free parking from 3pm.

Planning Reforms

A number of major reforms to the national planning system have been published over the summer. I am aware at last Scrutiny Commission the Chief Executive provided a brief overview of the key changes in Permitted Development, the review of the method for assessing housing numbers going forward and the publication of the 'Planning for the Future' White Paper. These will all have a fundamental impact on the way we can protect our local environment and guide future development.

I have already raised my concerns with our local MP and note there will be a dedicated Scrutiny session for all Members to brief them in more detail, of the proposed changes and to formulate our response to the document.

The new housing methodology suggested would double the number of new houses we would be expected to provide - it will be Planning by Algorithm and we all know how that has played out in education! I will be expecting a strong and robust response from this Council on the proposed changes.

MIRA Enterprise Zone

The paper being considered in private session tonight will provide a significant opportunity in partnership with the LLEP to help accelerate growth and investment in the MIRA Technology Park, supporting local job growth and recovery in the area.

Jobs and Growth

You will have seen the Chief Executive's update on Friday on feedback from our Employment and Skills Partnership. It is disappointing and worrying about the increase in numbers of claimants that have been reported by DWP of local people out of work. However, I am pleased that progress is being made on some key developments in and adjacent to the borough, which promises to create thousands of jobs over the next few years. (these include Hinckley Park and DPD; the new national distribution centre for Aldi at Nailstone; and Mercia Park at Appleby Magna for JLR, adjacent to our border).

National Forest

Tonight we have on the agenda a motion to extend the current National Forest boundary further to the west of the borough. Whilst I support the sentiments of the motion, I am also keen to see more green corridors created across the area to complement any extension to the Forest, this could include key opportunity areas in Hinckley along the Battling Brook corridor, Clarendon Park and areas under the control of Severn Trent. I have discussed this with my Executive Lead for Planning with a view to exploring further green corridor opportunities in our emerging Local Plan.

Stuart Bray, Leader of the Council
15 September 2020

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