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Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

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

Date: 05 October 2021

To: **All Members of Council**

Dear Councillor,

Please see overleaf a supplementary agenda for the meeting of the **COUNCIL** on **TUESDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2021** at **6.30 pm**.

Yours sincerely

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

Rebecca Owen
Democratic Services Manager

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

6. QUESTIONS

(a) Question from Councillor L Mullaney to the Leader of the Council:

“Leader, may I ask what the key objectives and positive outcomes that have arisen from the Crescent regeneration scheme and what the people of Hinckley have said about their priorities for it and how have we reported on the scheme’s commercial performance?”

Response from Councillor Bray:

“The Council set out its ambition for the bus station site in its development brief published in 2007. These are summarised as follows:

- Significantly improve the retail shopping offer
- Deliver new leisure facilities including a state of the art multi-screen cinema
- Secure a high quality building
- Achieve a sustainable development that enhanced the public realm of the town centre.

A number of key objectives underpinned this ambition:

- To provide retail, leisure and other facilities for the local community to meet identified need and help sustain the vitality and visibility of the town centre
- Contribute for the growth and improvement of the town centre with new quality retail and leisure facilities, leading to improved investor confidence in Hinckley
- Assist in preventing the identified leakage of spend out of Hinckley to competing centres
- To vastly improve the ambience of the area for those who work and live in the vicinity of the site
- Restoring community pride in the area
- Providing a major employment opportunity in a sustainable location, creating new investment opportunities and over 600 new jobs
- Addressing the existing town centre transport issues by providing an improved bus station for the town, together with enhance public parking provision
- Bringing significant improvements to the built environment and landscape of the town
- Creating and enhancing pedestrian and cycle routes through the site and enhancing linkage with the rest of the town centre
- Creating new areas of landscaping, public areas and open space to improve the environmental and public realm of the area.

All of these key objectives have been met. In addition, an independent report commissioned in 2015 placed Hinckley in the top 5% of retail footprint centres in the UK as a result of the development and improved its standing from 23rd to the 11th largest retail footprint centre in the East Midlands.

Further independent economic assessments that have been undertaken also demonstrate the significant economic impact of the Crescent. In 2017, a study undertaken by Amion showed the total economic impact being generated by the scheme for Hinckley town centre was more than £20M net additional GVA per annum, with over 1,000 additional jobs generated linked to an £82M capital investment into the scheme.

A further economic study undertaken by Warwickshire Economics in 2019 highlighted that Hinckley town centre generated £178M of GVA to the local economy with retail and leisure accounting for £57.6M GVA (45.5%).

It is, therefore, clear that despite the economic and more recent Covid Pandemic challenges, the Crescent has been a huge success, contributing significantly to the economic and physical regeneration of the town centre.

The residents of the borough have told us what's important to them. In fact, as early as 2006 a survey of the boroughs' residents highlighted that 45% of all respondents selected cinema as their top priority for new facilities in Hinckley, with over a quarter of all young people voting this as their top choices.

This was further reinforced with the feedback on the shortlisted developer schemes with people voting the Tin Hat Crescent scheme with its mix of uses as their favourite. Ultimately, when the former administration decided to sell off the cinema and restaurant block, the residents of the borough voted with their feet and supported the current administration's campaign to retain these important facilities in Council ownership.

The commercial return of the project has never been a top priority for the Council – moreover, it has been the wider economic and physical transformation and impact that the scheme would bring to the town as already referenced.

The Council has considered reports on the commercial arrangement and performance of the Crescent dating back to 2013. In more recent years, reports on Block C have been considered by Scrutiny Commission and Council in 2018, 2019 and there have been questions responded to at Council – the most recent in December 2020 by the Leader of the Conservative Group.”

(b) Question from Councillor Collett to the Executive member for Finance:

“Can the Executive member for Finance please confirm the total amount of funding received from the Government to assist with the Coronavirus pandemic? Can the Executive member also confirm the total amount of Coronavirus assistance funding distributed by this council to local business, councils and worthy causes?”

Response from Councillor Lynch:

“Other government grant income to give support to the council for loss of income, additional costs and new burdens was £3,602,739. This was for 2020/21, there will be some more for 2021/22, but not finally settled year, but approximately £1.1m so far. There was also S31 support to cover the reliefs given to retail business, which meant we had to stand down the business rates collected of £5,401,499 (£3.9m was for 2020/21, the rest is 2021/22).

As at 27 September 2021, the value of grants paid was £36,404,157 with the number of individual grants made being 7037 since March 2020. (Note that businesses may have had more than one grant, so the 7037 does not represent separate businesses).”

8. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S POSITION STATEMENT

I am pleased to welcome back all Members to the Council Chamber for the Council meeting, which is the first time we have convened here, in full, since the start of the pandemic in 2020.

The key items of business on the agenda tonight are the Gambling Act policy, which will be presented by Executive lead, Cllr Martin Cartwright, and a report on appointing external auditors, which will be presented by Executive lead, Cllr Keith Lynch. We also have a motion presented by Cllr Michael Mullaney and seconded by Cllr Ann Pendlebury on universal credit.

I have set out below a few key updates.

Devolution

I have recently confirmed my general support, along with other district leaders, to the County Council's expression of interest to Government for a devolution deal. It is entitled "A great connected county – a devolution deal for Leicestershire" and will cover the following main themes; investment fund for key projects; infrastructure to support sustainable and inclusive growth via an uplifted transport settlement; environment and net zero powers and funding; digital connectivity and broadband; adult skills; tourism and healthcare integration; children and young people commissioning. Crucially it is important to note that the deal does not involve local government reform and restructuring for Leicestershire. I would have concerns over any proposals for elected mayors as a pre-condition of any devolution deal on which my strong views are well known.

Afghan resettlement and asylum seekers

The Council has been working with other Leicestershire districts to support vulnerable Afghan families and I am pleased to confirm we will be accommodating one family in the borough. Following contact from the Home Office over the potential use of a hotel in Earl Shilton for asylum seekers, I can report that following representation made by the Council and other agencies, including the police and fire service, the Home Office have made the sensible decision to withdraw this proposal.

Local policing operation

I would like to express my thanks to officers in housing and community safety who have supported the police with intelligence and via daily briefings in a major drugs operation over the last few weeks in the area. This has led to 43 people arrested for buying and selling drugs - known as County Lines. This includes a number of significant individuals who are believed to have been controlling the 'County Lines'. This involves criminals from larger cities moving to particular areas, such as ours, often into vulnerable peoples' houses in order to take over their lives by establishing a drug supply criminal enterprise in that area. This can have significant consequence for communities and vulnerable people, whilst also raising crime and anti-social behaviour in the area.

The policing operation, called Operation Impose, has executed 73 warrants. During the operation officers recovered almost £200,000 in cash, various offensive weapons and around 6kg of heroin with a value in excess of £300,000 – not taking into account street value.

I would like to also extend my thanks to Jamie Osborne the local policing commander and his colleagues at Leicestershire Constabulary for their work on securing these positive outcomes for our area.

Community centre opening – Burbage

I am delighted that the Meadows Community Centre in Burbage reopened in September, marked by a local celebration open day and supported by our Community House team.

We continue to work with communities in community housing areas and across our rural communities to improve community engagement and inclusion thanks to the great work of our community housing team and support of local members.

VCS Celebration

An event took place in September at the Atkins building, marking the very successful partnership and work of Next Generation. The event also marked the formal handing over of the baton to the RCC in taking forward the great work with the voluntary sector. I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to Shani Smith and her colleagues at Next Generation for the legacy that they have created.

Events

It was fantastic to see the return of this years' Proms event that took place in our award winning Hollycroft park. This was a wonderful spectacle which saw an audience of 1,000 plus flag waving and feeling very proud.

We also saw the return of the annual Hinckley car show in September, which attracted over 13,500 visitors to see 600 classic cars on display.

Please keep Friday, 19 November as a date for your diaries for the Hinckley Christmas lights switch on.

Platinum Jubilee celebrations – street parties

Yesterday the Government published guidance on organising local street parties to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. We will ensure the guidance is added to our website and parishes are informed to support our communities in celebrating this historic event.

Launch of New Business Support Grant

Over the coming weeks the Council will be launching a new round of assisted recovery grants to local businesses to assist them in economic recovery, following the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stuart Bray
Leader of the Council
5 October 2021

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