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Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

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

Date: 30 November 2021

To: All Members of Council

Dear Councillor,

Please see overleaf a supplementary agenda for the meeting of the **COUNCIL** on **TUESDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 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

8. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S POSITION STATEMENT

Welcome to this December Council and may I take this opportunity of wishing all members and officers of the Council a very merry and restful Christmas, which is well deserved following the extremely challenging year that we have faced due to the pandemic.

On tonight's agenda we have an item on the engagement and response process for the National Rail Freight Interchange, which the Council is strongly opposed to. Given the continued challenges nationally and locally concerning shortage of qualified HGV drivers, there is a report on increasing capacity for the refuse service. There are also items on progress of partnership arrangements on the building control service and an update on investment opportunities at Horiba MIRA.

You will note the motion from my colleague, Cllr Mullaney, seconded by Councillor Pendlebury, regarding recent closures of bank branches in Hinckley, which I hope we will all support.

I have set out below a few key updates.

Levelling Up Bid Success

I am pleased to confirm our success in securing almost £20m from the Government's Levelling Up Fund for our bid, submitted in partnership with Twycross Zoo, for a new National Science and Conservation Centre at the zoo, which will be of international significance and bring new jobs and a real boost to the Midlands and local economy. Progress on the plans will be developed in earnest in the New Year and the scheme is expected to be completed by April 2024.

COP26

In response to COP26 we have refreshed our Climate Change Strategy which will be presented to the next programmed Scrutiny Commission and Council. I'm also pleased to report the CEO of Hinckley and Rugby Building Society, a key local business in Hinckley, had the opportunity to speak at COP26 and will be providing a presentation at the Council's Employment and Skills Partnership later this week.

Spending Review

Following the Government's spending review announcement in early November, which confirmed a £1.6bn annual allocation to local government over the next three years, we expect to receive our provisional allocation in December. We still do not know if we will receive a multi-year settlement or only a one year settlement, which makes it extremely challenging to budget and plan over the medium term.

Business Grant Support

I am pleased to confirm we have launched a further round of COVID business support funding of £0.75m to assist retail and hospitality and tourism businesses. Details are available on our website.

Parish and Hinckley Community Initiative Funds 2022/23

I am pleased to report we have launched the bidding process for community projects within our parishes and in Hinckley. The closing date for applications will be 7 January 2022. I would encourage all members to consider worthy causes within their parishes and wards.

Green Flag Awards

I am pleased two of Hinckley's parks are once again amongst the best in the UK after they were awarded the much coveted Green Flag - a prestigious accolade only awarded to the very best parks and green spaces. The award is a sign to the public that the space boasts the highest possible environment standards, beautifully maintained and has excellent visitor facilities. This is a credit to our Green Spaces team and friends of the parks who work tirelessly all year to keep our parks in pristine condition.

Remembrance Sunday

It was pleasing to see so many people come out to remember those lost in the two World Wars and all subsequent conflicts at our remembrance parade in Hinckley and to all those veterans and agencies who supported the event, as well as local Scout and Cadet Groups. Also, to all those remembrance events that took place within parishes across the borough.

LCC Response to Local Plan Review

I am disappointed and concerned over the County Council's recent article published in the Hinckley Times and linked to its Cabinet report on this matter. This is clearly politically motivated and designed to "rock the boat" and take away attention from the County Council failings. In one breath, the County Council is saying it has had no involvement and in another it has concluded that it is unsound and disturbing - funny that the full plan hasn't been published yet and wasn't in the public domain at the time the county council went to press!

The truth of the matter is the Conservative Government has set local authorities a deadline to produce new local plans by the end of 2023. Given the time taken by the Planning Inspectorate to examine plans we need to finalise our plan and submit it early in the New Year. Indeed, in October the Government's own Chief Planner said "We would strongly encourage local authorities to continue the preparation and adoption of local plans". In January this year the Housing Minister said in parliament "Authorities should not use this period as a reason to delay plan-making activities". In February the same Minister wrote to me and said "Adopting up-to-date plans by the end of 2023 will help ensure that we build back better and deliver the homes that are needed across England". In March this year our Conservative MP wrote to me and asked me to ensure a new Local Plan is "put in place as soon as possible".

And only in the last week or so the Government's Chief Planner wrote to all Councils and said "Colleagues in local planning authorities are encouraged to continue with the preparation of local plans and provision of infrastructure funding statements (the deadline for which is approaching)".

So here we are seeking to do our best to do all of this but are getting criticised by the County Council for going too fast! We rely on organisations like the County Council, which has statutory responsibilities for things such as education and highways, to help us

formulate our plans and to advise us of what infrastructure they understand is needed in the borough to support future development and communities. Disappointingly the County Council seemingly is unwilling or unable to keep pace with the progress we are making in working to Government's timeframes for the Local Plan.

This isn't a HBBC problem but sits with the County Council. I don't know if it is a lack of resource at the County Council or a lack of understanding of the local area and Government's requirements that is stopping them providing timely advice.

I would say that as a County Councillor the officers who I come into contact with are hard-working and doing their best, so I can only assume that this is all politically motivated – but to what end? Another push for unitary status? Or is it because the County Council is pushing its own land holdings for development such as the new settlement at Stoney Stanton and other local sites and therefore doesn't want our plans to take up capacity on the existing highway network?

We have decided to delay the publication version of our Local Plan until January, which should give sufficient time for the County Council to provide advice to us on what it considers the infrastructure needs required and how future development can help meet these needs. Our officers have set up regular meeting with county colleagues to push forward the final work streams to enable us to progress as quickly as possible.

I call on all County Councillors to stop playing politics on this matter or speak to our MP and the Minister and explain to them why they are unable to help us get our plan provided to meet the Government's timetable.

Events

I hope you all managed to attend this year's Christmas lights switch on in Hinckley along with the firework display. It was great to see so many people attend this great festive event. Market Bosworth, Earl Shilton, Burbage and Barwell and our Parishes are all in the process of switching on their displays and I wish them well for that.

Forthcoming Christmas festivities in Hinckley include:

- The Christmas Car Trail on Wednesday, 1 December allowing residents with mobility challenges to view our amazing lights display
- A Santa Fun Run along our town centre roads on Sunday, 5 December
- Carols around the tree on Friday, 10 December
- Festive Feast and Craft Market on Sunday, 12 December
- And let's not forget Santa's Grotto opens up between 18 and 22 December

I'm delighted to confirm we will be offering free parking on Saturdays leading up to Christmas in key carparks across the town which will be publicised by us and the Hinckley Bid to attract shoppers and support local businesses.

Stuart Bray
Leader of the Council
30 November 2021

11b Motion proposed by Councillor Ladkin and seconded by Councillor Morrell

“Council recognises the limited success of COP26 and asks the Climate Change Member Working Group to note and act on them”.

Amendment to be moved by Councillor Webber-Jones and seconded by Councillor Bill:

“Council recognises the successes of COP26.

The commitment simply to ‘phase down’ the use of coal is a major disappointment which needs revisiting by the world leaders at the earliest opportunity if there is any hope of keeping the 1.5 degree goal alive.

The UK standing at conference was undermined by the government’s budget announcements on domestic flight ahead of the conference and the Prime Minister’s decision to fly to the conference generating unnecessary emissions.

The Council remains fully committed to tackling climate change locally and asks the Climate Change Member Working Group to note and act on the outcomes.”

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