

Public Document Pack



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

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

Date: 25 January 2022

To: All Members of Council

Dear Councillor,

Please see overleaf a supplementary agenda for the meeting of the **COUNCIL** on **TUESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2022 at 6.30 pm.**

Yours sincerely

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

Rebecca Owen
Democratic Services Manager

COUNCIL - 25 JANUARY 2022

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

6. QUESTIONS

To deal with questions under Council Procedure Rule number 14:

1. Question from Councillor Boothby to the Executive member for Planning

“Will the Executive Member for Planning please confirm the following information regarding the Planning function as at 31 December 2021:-

- a. Spend YTD on Consultants and temporary staff cover
- b. Provide an update on recruitment for all vacant positions within Planning and Enforcement.
- c. Confirm the number of Planning Applications received awaiting verification.
- d. Confirm the number of Planning Applications awaiting Decision split between Minor and Major.
- e. Spend YTD on Planning Appeals.
- f. Confirm the number of Planning Applications approaching, at or pass their target Decision Date (ie at risk of Appeal for Non-Determination).

Will the Member undertake to provide a rolling monthly report on the above to Planning and Scrutiny Committee.”

Response from the Executive member:

“Councillor Boothby, thank you for your question. Local authorities up and down the country are facing the challenge of increasing workload and short supply of professional planners. Hinckley and Bosworth is no different. This leads to longer waiting times for applicants and increased costs for us. In answer to your specific questions, I can confirm as follows:

- a. The spend on consultants and temporary staff cover will be reported to Council and the Scrutiny Commission as part of the budget process
- b. With regards to recruitment for vacant positions, we have successfully recruited a new planning manager who starts on 14 February. We are currently carrying a further seven vacancies in the development management team. The closing date for applications for these roles was 9 January. Shortlisting has taken place and invites for interviews are going out shortly. In the enforcement team we have a new starter this week and have two further vacancies. Unfortunately no suitable candidates applied during the last recruitment process.
- c. The number of planning applications received awaiting verification is 139
- d. The number of major planning applications awaiting decision is 71, and 372 minor
- e. The spend on planning appeals up to the end of December is £155,300

- f. 365 planning applications are approaching, at or passed their target decision date (ie at risk of appeal for non-determination).”

2. Question from Councillor R Allen to the Executive member for Planning

“Will the Administration please provide an update on the progress of the Hinckley High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ), including details of the funding available and its source, a breakdown of the amounts spent to date, confirmation of who authorises payments for this project.

Given that HBBC Officers are involved and the significant sums available to this important project, will the Administration commit to bringing regular updates on plans, progress and expenditure to Council (Scrutiny Committee?)”

Response from the Executive member

“I thank Councillor Allen for his question.

I am pleased to confirm that progress on the various projects within the Hinckley High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) continues to be made which allows us to give much needed support to the town centre and its businesses. Briefly I will mention some key updates

- On the public realm projects, following the consultation on three design options for the Church Walk car park a decision was taken not to reduce parking spaces on this key town centre carpark. A further design is therefore being finalised to reflect the feedback. This further option aims to maximise parking provision and promote a key route from Argents Mead to Castle Street via Church Walk. Additionally the details of the public realm proposals for the yards and jitties and for Castle Street are also being finalised with the physical works scheduled to commence later this year.
- The council has secured additional funding from Historic England to develop a HAZ Hub which would become a focal point in the town centre for community engagement and give an opportunity for scheme partners and cultural consortium members to use. A number of locations have been considered and we’re proposing to utilise a dedicated space within the Atkins building to establish the HSHAZ Hub.
- The Building Improvement Scheme offers grants for works of repair and restoration of significant historic features including shop fronts to targeted properties within the HAZ. The majority of restoration works are based on historic photographs and evidence available for each property. 17 expression of interest forms have been submitted with two schemes being completed and further schemes being drawn up. Officers are intending to continue targeted promotion on high priority properties.
- A programme coordinator for the Cultural Programme is in post for October 21 to March 22 and has been working with English Heritage on developing and coordinating heritage and cultural events. Through a Cultural consortium

of members and partners an initial programme of four potential projects is being finalised with the first event scheduled for early spring.

- As part of the Community Engagement Programme, Hinckley Archaeology Society ran Medieval Hinckley Walking Tours with all the walks fully booked and the feedback has been really positive.

Over the life of the HAZ which is until 31 March 2024, the total funding is £1.85m. The budget has already been approved by members through the budget process and is included in current budgets. There have subsequently been opportunities to bid for further funding for a HAZ hub and the Cultural programme which the council have successfully secured and these additional sums are managed separately and not included in the initial allocation. The £1.85m is made up of grants from Historic England and from the LLEP and a contribution from HBBC

Up to the end of Quarter 2 in 2021/22 £140,000 had been spent and officers are currently just updating the spend profile for the last quarter. The authorisation for expenditure is covered under the Council's scheme of delegation with regular quarterly monitoring from Historic England as well as the council's financial oversight through its own budget monitoring.

Officers will circulate regular updates to all Members as the schemes progress and more formal updates will be programmed for Scrutiny Commission on this exciting project over the next two years."

3. Question from Councillor O'Shea to the Executive member for Planning

"Can the Executive member please confirm that a detailed survey of brown field sites that are available across the Borough has been undertaken and make that report available to members?"

Utilizing more brown field sites, would protect more of our precious green countryside."

Response from the Executive member

"Thank you Councillor O'Shea for your question. I can confirm that the council has produced a Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) which assesses the deliverability of all land across the borough including brownfield land. This is available on our website. The council also produces a brownfield land register which is also available on our website."

4. Question from Councillor C Allen to the Leader of Council

"Will the Leader of the Council please explain why so many Executive Meetings have been cancelled under his Administration and reassure residents that all matters and decisions relating to this Council have been given full and appropriate consideration by the Executive."

Response from the Leader

“As I have sought to do effectively in this and previous Lib Dem run administrations of this council, I aim to ensure decision making is timely, transparent and democratic. As those members who have sat on the Executive will know, any reports coming forward will be presented to the responsible executive member by the relevant senior officer and then to the executive informally. At this point it can either go for decision to Executive or to full council depending on the legal requirements, usually via Scrutiny.

Unlike other authorities, some of which members will be all too familiar with, Hinckley and Bosworth takes a lot of these reports directly to full Council where the law allows, where members of all parties and representatives of all our communities can have their input. We believe this to be more open and democratic.”

5. Question from Councillor O’Shea to the Executive member for Streetscene Services

“Last February at full council, I asked for a detailed report on the actual cost of the Brown Bin service. The question was simple - what does it cost the council to break even on this service, compared to the amount of revenue that it brings in from council tax payers?

Please could the executive member provide members with that information.”

Response from the Executive member

“Councillor O’Shea, thank you for your question. The garden waste service costs the Council £466,000 to run – that is the net cost and accounts for the income from the subscription”.

6. Question from Councillor Morrell to the Executive member for Finance

“Would the Executive member as a matter of urgency, commission specialist consultants to examine the problems faced on the crematorium site and report back with mitigation measures and costings to Members as soon as possible? This would assist Members and Officers to make a fully informed decision as to whether to proceed, or scrap the project due to viability concerns?

Waiting and monitoring the site given that the problem is sub-ground conditions is a waste of time.

The solution may be to pile the heavily trafficked areas and the site of the crematorium, as was the solution for the new leisure centre.”

Response from the Executive member

“I think Councillor Morrell for his question and note his comments and suggestions of the solution to the problem. Bearing in mind that more than one proposal for a scheme of works has been proposed by specialists and have failed, I understand and share his frustration.

However, we as a council must rely upon the advice of experts in this field and seek to ensure that responsibility for such advice and any proposals resulting from it rests with those who we retain for that purpose.

A specialist consultant will be employed by the contractor as part of the monitoring works and a report will be issued to HBBC. At the end of this monitoring period, a suitable design solution can be produced to deal with the specific site conditions and at that point the council can decide whether to progress depending upon costs and whether the scheme is still deemed commercially viable. Whatever the outcome, any further for the site will need to be informed by the additional monitoring work.

I can, however, also confirm it is also our intention to directly employ our own specialist to assist us in validating this work and to help inform future options.”

7. Question from Councillor Ladkin to the Executive member for Finance

“At the Council Meeting of February 23rd 2021 it was resolved that MTFS 2.4 that there would be “no recurring supplementary requests for the period of the MTFS”.

Can the Executive Member for Finance please confirm that since that meeting, have there been any “recurring supplementary requests“ and If there have been any please list the items and amounts.”

Response from the Executive member

“I would like to thank Councillor Ladkin for the question which gives us the opportunity to demonstrate the minimal amount of recurring supplementary requests. In fact, the only recurring supplementary request is in relation to additional salary costs within the refuse & recycling service. The issues of driver shortages in this area was the subject of a report to Council in November 2021 which was unanimously supported. The ongoing net impact for this recurring supplementary is expected to be £22,000.”

8. Question from Councillor Roberts to the Executive member for Planning

“Will the Administration please explain what happened to the Council email over the Christmas and New Year period, where residents received bounce back emails from the Planning inbox in particular stating that it was full?”

Can the administration also confirm that action has now been taken to rectify the problem, the number of emails in the Planning inbox that resulted in a “Mailbox Full” message and reassure residents that everyone who emails the Council will receive a full and prompt response?”

Response from the Executive member

“Councillor Roberts, thank you for your question. I understand that rather than the generic planning inbox being full, customers received “mailbox full”

messages where they had copied in a particular officer. This can happen when large files are received, particularly over time when the council is shut such as weekends or over Christmas. I can reassure you that any emails sent to the generic inbox will have been received and passed onto the relevant officer.”

8. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S POSITION STATEMENT

Mr Mayor, may I welcome all Members of the first full Council meeting of 2022 and let's hope this will be a positive and productive year for Council business, despite the significant challenges the country and our residents and businesses face.

I have deliberately kept the statement short as we have a lot of business on the agenda, particularly with motions, which we will need time to debate

Funding Challenges

As we look forward there will be important considerations for the Council to consider in terms of addressing future budget challenges, particularly in view of the Government only providing a one year settlement, which makes it incredibly difficult to budget for key services going forward. These matters can be fully debated in February Budget Scrutiny and Council. Given the level of uncertainty, I have agreement with all political group leaders to delay the publication and consideration of the Medium Term Financial Strategy until early summer 2022.

COVID Recovery

As Members will be aware we have seen significantly high and unprecedented COVID infection levels in the borough, reaching over 2,500 cases per 100,000 in recent weeks. I am pleased to report the trend is currently a downward one, but our rates are still over 900 per 100,000. I am pleased that through our efforts with the NHS and local Clinical Commissioning Group we have seen further vaccination clinics operate at the leisure centre and other local venues. The public response for how we have managed the vaccination programme at the leisure centre has been extremely positive and this is a credit to the staff and volunteers involved.

Business Support Grants

I am pleased to report we launched a further business grant scheme, the ARG Omicron Support Grant Scheme. This will be targeted to hospitality, accommodation providers, tourism and leisure businesses and a range of other venues including theatres, events and gyms. This will be funded from a £204,000 government awarded top up grant.

Events

Work is underway on developing a full events programme for 2022. This will include key popular events such as Proms in the Park, Feast Hinckley and Armed forces celebrations and various other Easter and Summer holiday activities. We saw over 50,000 people engage in our events last year. It is increasingly important that these events support out town centres and attract and retain shoppers to help our businesses recover, who have suffered enormously from the impact of the pandemic.

A key highlight for this year will be special celebrations to honour the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Health and Wellbeing

I am pleased to report officers are in advanced discussions with our health partners in the NHS and CCG, on accommodating some health services within the Hinkley Hub and potentially some other Council venues.

The health and wellbeing of our residents is a top priority. We continue to roll out local health initiatives via a range of local preventative programmes. These include our falls prevention programme called “Steady Steps”, which has seen over 100 patients participate in sessions in the latter part of last year. Our voluntary led walking for health schemes (we currently have 3 across the borough in Burbage, Market Bosworth and Groby) regularly have over 75 residents participating and we have plans to double these walking for health programmes this year. These will help significantly with addressing those adults that are not currently participating in recommended weekly exercise activity in the borough.

Ambion Court - New Sheltered Housing Scheme

At our last meeting of Council I reported on progress that had been made on the successful completion of this fantastic new complex in Market Bosworth. I am pleased to report our first tenant, Jean Collins, moved in on 17 January.

Stuart Bray
Leader of the Council
25 January 2022

12. LOCAL PLAN

To seek agreement to consult on the local plan regulation 19 pre-submission version.

In moving the recommendations within the report, the Executive member will propose an additional motion, thereby moving the following:

“That Council approves

- (i) The Council notes with grave concern the “Build Build Build” agenda of the Conservative government who are insisting that Hinckley & Bosworth allocates 9,000 houses in the period up to 2039;
- (ii) The publication of the pre-submission draft of the Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan and supporting documents for consultation during the period 2 February 2022 to 16 March 2022 in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Regulations (Local Development) (England) 2004 (as amended);
- (iii) The submission of the Local Plan and supporting documents to the Secretary of State for examination in public following analysis of the representations received during the consultation period;

- (iv) Delegation of responsibility for minor drafting errors, factual updates, topographical errors, drafting or proposals map and desktop publishing to the Director (Environment and Planning) in consultation with the Executive member for Planning.

13. MOTIONS RECEIVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 17

- (e) Motion proposed by Councillor Roberts, seconded by Councillor H Williams

This motion will now be moved by Councillor H Williams and seconded by Councillor R Allen.

This motion proposes that the Council undertakes to identify and retain the leading specialist in cemetery drainage to review and implement the most effective remedial drainage plan to address the flooding issues in the Ashby Road Cemetery (extension) for the long term and to ensure that all relevant legislation relating to burial grounds is fully complied with.

Further proposed that Council will instigate a cross party working group to focus on this crucial and sensitive issue. Said working group will report their progress and recommendations to Council.

An amendment will be proposed by Councillor W Crooks and seconded by Councillor Gibbens:

“Council notes the flooding problems in the Ashby Road Cemetery extension over the past 18 months and apologises and expresses sympathy to any families concerned.

Council further notes the extensive specialist drainage works recently carried out in the area and places on record its thanks to the Green Spaces team for the progress made.

Council once again condemns the decision of the Secretary of State to allow the infilling and building on the Big Pit which many residents feel has exacerbated flooding problems in the area.

Council further commits to continuing to monitor the situation carefully and undertaking any further remedial works necessary to address the flooding issues in the Ashby Road Cemetery extension and to ensure that all relevant legislation relating to burial grounds is fully complied with.

The Council requests that a regular monitoring and progress report is brought to the Hinckley Area Committee which is responsible for the cemetery.”

- (f) Motion proposed by Councillor Boothby, seconded by Councillor O'Shea

This motion proposes that the Burroughs in Ratby, as a key recreational and environmental asset that provides an essential ‘Green Lung’ in proximity to Leicester City and major trunk road infrastructure, be preserved and protected

from development throughout the life of the next Local Development Plan.

This motion has been withdrawn.

- (g) Urgent motion proposed by Councillor M Mullaney and seconded by Councillor Sheppard-Bools

Council notes its severe disappointment in the Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Council further notes that, in the view of the public, the Prime Minister acted unlawfully, misled parliament and lied to the residents of our country.

Council adds that while the Prime Minister attended Downing Street parties, millions of people obeyed the lockdown rules, often at huge personal cost. They missed funerals, cancelled weddings and said goodbye to dying loved ones on video calls – some on the very day that Number Ten illegally hosted a garden party.

Council condemns the Prime Minister who has now become a threat to the health of our nation, and for the sake of the country still gripped by this awful pandemic, he must resign.

Council calls upon the Leader of the Council to write to Boris Johnson stating that the Council has no confidence in his leadership and calls for him to resign.

Council resolves that we no longer have confidence in the Prime Minister.