

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

24 SEPTEMBER 2013 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: MRS L HODGKINS - MAYOR
MR JG BANNISTER – DEPUTY MAYOR

Mr PR Batty, Mr DC Bill MBE, Mr CW Boothby, Mr SL Bray,
Mrs R Camamile, Mr MB Cartwright, Mrs T Chastney, Mr DM Gould,
Mr PAS Hall, Mrs WA Hall, Mr MS Hulbert, Mr DW Inman, Mr C Ladkin,
Mr MR Lay, Mr KWP Lynch, Mr R Mayne, Mr JS Moore, Mr K Morrell,
Mr MT Mullaney, Mr K Nichols, Mrs J Richards, Mrs H Smith,
Mrs S Sprason, Miss DM Taylor, Mr R Ward and Ms BM Witherford

Officers in attendance: Steve Atkinson, Bill Cullen, Louisa Horton, Sanjiv Kohli, Rebecca Owen, Rob Parkinson and Caroline Roffey

188 PRAYER

Prayer was offered by Reverend John Whittaker.

189 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Allen, Bessant, Cope, Crooks, O'Shea and Sutton.

190 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

On the motion of Councillor Nichols, seconded by Councillor Mayne, it was

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2013 be approved and signed by the Mayor.

191 ADDITIONAL URGENT BUSINESS

One additional item of business was announced as printed on the supplementary agenda: membership of Planning Committee. This would be taken at the end of the agenda. This item was deemed urgent as it had come to light after despatch of the agenda but was considered prudent to take at this meeting prior to the next Planning Committee.

192 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made at this stage.

193 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

During her communications, the Mayor made reference to Tim Norton from Groundcare who had broken his neck in a kayaking accident on holiday. Members joined with her in sending their best wishes to Tim.

The Mayor also referred to the Local Democracy event on 15 October 2013 which would again see pupils from local schools attending to take part in various activities including an exercise to identify the qualities required of a councillor.

With regard to local events, the Mayor highlighted the success of Hinckley Carnival, the Classic Car Show and the over 50s day.

Regarding charity events, the Mayor referred to a walk along the canal undertaken by the sea cadets, Cllr Hulbert's weight loss challenge, her son-in-law and a friend's sponsored bike ride and her forthcoming casino night.

The Mayor concluded by presenting certificates from Grand Quevilly to two chefs from North Warwickshire and Hinckley College – Jason Thacker and Peter Anderson, who had accompanied her on this year's town twinning visit in order to take part in a culinary event with chefs from other twin towns.

194 QUESTIONS RECEIVED UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NUMBER 11.1

(a) Question from Cllr Hulbert to the Executive Member for Culture & Leisure

Does the Executive Member agree with me that the increased amount of activities and youth clubs for children and young people in Barwell in recent times is positive news for the village and will he join me in paying tribute to those who lead it, especially the many volunteers?

Response from Cllr Cope

Volunteers are valued and fully appreciated by myself and my colleagues. Without their dedicated commitment, the offer to our families would be significantly diminished.

To demonstrate this here are some examples:

595 young people from Barwell, supported by 24 volunteers and staff from the Community House attended a variety of fun activities during the summer. These activities were complemented by new provision at The George Ward Centre.

Supporting the National Play Charter that the Council adopted in January 2013, the HBBC Play Workers supported Barwell Methodist Church, along with other partners who engaged with 72 children offering them a healthy lunch and play activities, encouraging team work and sociability, imagination, group cohesion, compassion, participation in activities, behaviour improvement.

To tackle the healthy weight issues in children HBBC are working with education and health partners to deliver physical activity programmes.

The feedback received from parents/grandparents/carers and residents were that it was an "excellent summer in Barwell for children with such an array of activities and trips going on".

I thank the volunteers, Partners and HBBC Officers for their continued support. Barwell should be proud of its achievements.

(b) Question from Cllr Hulbert to the Executive Member for Finance, ICT & Asset Management

I'd like to ask the lead member how many successful benefit fraud prosecutions there's been in the borough in each of the past five years?

Response from Cllr Lynch

I thank Cllr Hulbert for his question. The number of successful benefit fraud prosecutions in the Borough over the last 5 years are listed below:

Number of successful Benefit Fraud Prosecutions - Hinckley & Bosworth BC					
2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	01.04.13 to date
6	8	12	19	16	7

(c) Question from Cllr Moore to the Leader of the Council

Our letter head proclaims "A Borough to be proud of". At the last meeting of this Council, the Party I'm honoured to represent took the decision to underline this boast by taking positive action to drive forward our Town's regeneration.

Could I ask the Leader, has he like me noted the fact that this building, which is the Civic Centre of our Borough, seems to be keeping its light under a bushel. It sits at one of the prime gateways to our Town, every vehicle entering from the South has to pass its doors, yet we have a situation where the flag pole, which I believe should be proudly flying our Borough flag, is tucked away behind the building.

Additionally, others districts in the country are proud to associate themselves with their "twinning towns", as I'm sure is true of our town, by placing a plaque proclaiming the fact at or close to their main entrance. Could I ask Leader, as the portfolio holder for the Town Centre, does he not agree with me that these oversights should, with some urgency, be remedied?

Response from Cllr Witherford

The flagpole to the Hinckley Hub is situated to the left of the main entrance to the short stay car-park of the Hinckley Hub in a prominent position. The Council flies the Union flag from this point on formally agreed designated days, the Council flag to signify full Council meetings and the Armed Forces Flag on Armed Forces Day which is next celebrated on the 28th of June 2014. The flagpole cannot be used for any other occasion as it would then be considered as an advertising banner and be subject to appropriate planning approvals. If the flagpole is to be relocated closer to the highway it may be considered by County Council Highways as a potential driver distraction. The cost of relocation would be in the region of £1000.

We're equally proud to associate ourselves with our twin towns of Grand Quevilly and Herford as evidenced by the rock gardens on Coventry Road which are dedicated to Grand Quevilly and the Hinckley-Herford gardens at the bottom of Church Walk. So far as plaques commemorating our links with these two towns are concerned, unfortunately there is limited space at the entrance of the Hub for such display, together with the fact that we have partners within the building who have no connection with the town twinning concept enjoyed by Hinckley and Bosworth. We have now instigated dedication of two of our meetings rooms – one for each of our twin towns, which will display the gifted items from previous town twinning visits.

By way of a supplementary question, Cllr Moore agreed that the £1,000 cost of relocation was not a sensible use of funds, but suggested that some other authorities obtained sponsorship for such things. He asked if this could be investigated. In response, Cllr Witherford agreed to do so.

(d) Question from Cllr Ward to the Leader of the Council

Further to the letter published in the 12th September edition of the Hinckley Times "Is staff free bus right" and having been asked this question by a number of people and not knowing the answer, could the Executive member please confirm to me the details and total costs associated with regard to the Park & Ride and Shoppers Bus service to and from the Hub provided by the Council for employees and is this service also provided for the benefit of the Council's partner organisations at the Hub.

Can the Executive member please confirm for what length of time it is envisaged to provide this service and is this provided at council tax payers' expense and if so, at which Council meeting was this arrangement was approved.

Response from Cllr Bray

As part of the cost saving exercise in 2011-12 all staff undertaking business mileage were reviewed and approximately 100 were reclassified as casual users saving the Council approximately £130k per year ongoing. On moving from Argents Mead those re-designated staff also lost their permit for car parking at the Hinckley Hub. To encourage all staff to take up the season tickets for long stay car parks, it was agreed by Executive in May 2013 that staff could park at the underutilised Brunel Road car parks for a period of six months. To further encourage this use of the long stay car parks, a three month trial of a shuttle bus was agreed running for one hour morning, lunchtime and afternoons linking the Hub, car parks and town centre. This was also to encourage staff to continue utilising the town centre shopping during lunch times which has the support of the Town Centre Partnership. Use has been relatively low except for lunchtimes with most staff walking to the Hub from Brunel Road. The cost is approximately £1,300 per month and the service is provided by Westfield Community Centre. The Council has however received an additional £30k for long stay car parking permits for Leicestershire County Council Staff working in the Hub who also utilise the shuttle bus. Following a review of the service the shuttle bus will cease at the end of the September.

(e) Question from Cllr Morrell to the Leader of the Council (as Executive Member for Planning)

An article appeared in the Hinckley Times on 12th September, quoting unhappy Barlestone residents, complaining that travellers on the illegally established Good Friday caravan site which has been a blight on their area since Easter 2009 have been given yet another year to vacate and then re-instate this site. Can the Executive member please clarify why the Council has felt it necessary to extend their stay this long when no such lengthy delay would be considered if a Council tenant was being evicted and also whether the Council has any real confidence that the site will actually be vacated.

No doubt the Executive member will also be aware from the article that residents expressed concerns as to whether the travellers will take any notice of the eviction notice and make good the field, as this will be a huge job and that if the travellers do not comply with the notice, who will pay for this? Can the Executive member provide any assurance that the site will be cleared and re-instated in accordance with the notices issued and who will pay, if the travellers don't?

Response from Cllr Bray

In taking enforcement action that Council must act reasonably in all respects it is important to note that the terms of the enforcement notice were considered by Planning Committee on 23 July. Whilst the time for compliance was discussed, there was no motion proposed to amend the notice period or its requirements. The Enforcement Notice was served on 16 August 2013 and required full clearance and reinstatement of the land. The responsibility of the cost of this work would fall to the occupiers.

The Council has now received formal notification for the Planning Inspectorate of an appeal against the enforcement notice. The appellant is appeal on the grounds that planning permission should be granted and that the time period for compliance with the notice is not long enough. Accordingly, the matter is now in the hands of the Planning Inspectorate, and an independent Inspector will determine if the notice and its time for compliance is reasonable.

Given the notification of the appeal the matter of compliance with the notice is currently held in abeyance and thus the matters of site clearance, reinstatement and associated costs is not currently under consideration. Speculation on such matters may be considered to prejudice the Councils case at appeal.

- (f) Question from Cllr Batty to the Leader of council (as Executive Member for Planning)

Clearly there still appears to be conflicting opinion on what counts towards a 5 year housing land supply. Appeal Inspectors recently appearing only to give weight to “deliverable” completions when calculating eligible numbers. Can the Executive member provide, with any real certainty, assurances with regard to this Council’s current 5 year housing land position when it is significantly dependent on plots with outline consent and no completed S106 agreements in place?

With the number of Appeals pending and with the Borough, particularly Burbage, under a deluge of unwelcome planning applications, does the Executive member agree that this Council needs to be absolutely sure of its’ interpretation of what constitutes a 5 year housing land supply.

Response from Cllr Bray

You are correct in stating that Appeal Inspectors only give weight to deliverable sites when calculating housing numbers to be included in the five year housing land supply. Indeed, this is consistent with the Borough Council’s own approach which also only gives weight to deliverable sites.

The approach taken follows the guidance contained within paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy Statement (NPPF) and its associated footnote (11). Footnote 11 states that:

To be considered deliverable, sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable. Sites with planning permission should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that schemes will not be implemented within five years, for example they will not be viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans.

Taking this guidance into account, when calculating the 5 year supply, the Council includes sites with planning permission, outline planning permission and planning permissions pending the signing of a s106 agreement unless there is clear evidence available that schemes will not be delivered within the 5 year period.

The deliverability of sites included within the Borough's five year housing land supply calculation has been considered by Inspectors at recent planning appeals. The principle of including outline planning permissions, including those pending s106 agreements, has been accepted. Indeed, the Inspector that determined the most recent case of relevance to this issue (Shilton Road, Barwell) agreed with the Council's interpretation of what constitutes a five year housing land supply position by concluding that a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites had been demonstrated.

As a supplementary question, Cllr Batty asked if, taking into account the 80 completions in Barwell which were required in order to meet the housing trajectory in addition to 160 completions in 2014 and the fact that the SUE decision had not yet been issued, the authority was likely to be able to deliver against the five year housing land supply. Cllr Bray committed to providing Cllr Batty with a written response.

(g) Question from Cllr Ladkin to the Executive Member for Culture & Leisure

I notice from the current issue of the Borough Bulletin, publicity given to the switch on of the Council's town centre Christmas lights. Bearing in mind the few nervous moments at last year's switch on ceremony, can the Executive member please confirm what if any changes or improvements have been made for this years display and at what cost, bearing in mind the actual number of lights appear to have been progressively fewer and fewer each year.

Can the Executive member also confirm how many years it was since these particular lights were purchased and what are the Council's anticipated plans and budget the for town centre Christmas lights in 2015 when the Council has assured us that the Bus Station redevelopment will be completed.

Response from Cllr Cope

The erection of the Christmas Lights contract for Hinckley town centre and Market Bosworth has just been through a robust tender process. I'm pleased to announce that a local company has been awarded the contract. The winning company offers excellent value for money and have provided assurances that the situation that occurred last year (which was simply down to human error) will not happen this year. The new contract will provide the Council with an efficiency savings and also allows us to purchase replacement lights over the next 3 years ensuring sustainability.

During the previous 4 years all of the lights have been renewed. As the lights are perishable, the Council will replace and upgrade, within budgetary limitations, over the next 3 years. With regards to the Crescent bus station development, the Council are in dialogue with the Developers to ensure there is a 'Christmas Lighting display' and this is complementary to Hinckley town centre's existing display.

(h) Question from Cllr Batty to the Executive Member for Finance, ICT & Asset Management

An article by the Deputy Chief Executive Corporate Direction was recently published in the Hinckley Times with a bold headline claiming that the "Hinckley Hub is saving the council money from day one". Clearly this headline would suggest to most council tax payers that there has been an overall saving to the Council from day one as a result of moving to the Hinckley Hub. Can the Executive member for finance please confirm if this is actually the case bearing in mind that the Council actually owned Argents Mead and there was no rent to pay, whereas the Council is now tied to an expensive 30 year plus lease on the Hinckley Hub.

Therefore, in order that we can all understand whether there actually was an overall saving to the Council from day one as suggested by the article's headline, could the Executive member for Finance please provide us with a detailed breakdown, taking into account all relocation costs including IT and office fitting out, costs of the lease etc, compared to the undoubted savings from energy efficiency and rent on Florence House, I trust there was no rent penalty on ending the Florence House lease.

Response from Cllr Lynch

In response to Cllr Batty's question I will firstly point out that the Headline in the Hinckley Times was not given or suggested by the Deputy Chief Executive, Corporate Direction and the content of his letter did not claim to have made savings from day one. However, now that Cllr Batty has given me the opportunity I will set out briefly how this Council has made savings from day one and will continue to avoid future costs that would have come with all of the options that have been considered by Council over the past 3 years.

I suggest to Cllr Batty that instead of raising questions based on articles in the Hinckley Times, he goes back and reads the numerous reports that have been to Full Council for consideration in the past two years. I particularly point him to the very detailed report that was approved by this Council on 29th June 2010 which set out the financial and operational implications of all of the options that were available to this Council. A copy of this report can be accessed from the Council's website.

When Cllr Batty has refreshed his memory, he will no doubt remember that the savings to this Council come not only from lower energy and running costs, the savings also come from the fact that had the Council remained any longer at it's Argents Mead offices then there would have been significant maintenance costs to pay. The alternative option that was considered was to temporarily move staff to the Atkins building and then move them to offices in the Bus Station development when complete. This would have incurred additional re-location costs and disruption to services. By only moving the once to the Hub savings were made of just over £400,000. In addition, I will remind Cllr Batty that by making the decision to move to the Hub the Council secured over £1million capital receipt from the Developer. Neither of these sums would have come to fruition if we did not move to the Hub.

The other options that were considered at the time were to refurbish the existing offices at Argents Mead or to build our own offices. These options would have cost this Council between £470,000 (for refurbishment) and £850,000 (for new build) per annum in borrowing costs. The comparative cost for this Council (after partner contributions) is around £350,000 per annum. Therefore, avoiding further

costs to the taxpayer from day one before annual savings in running costs of around £75,000 per annum.

195 URGENT QUESTION RECEIVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES 11.1 AND 11.3(B)

The Mayor allowed the following urgent question to be put due to the information being made public after the deadline for questions and it being considered an urgent matter:

Question from Councillor Lay to the Executive Member for Finance, ICT and Asset Management

Could the Executive Member for Finance confirm that Leicestershire County Council is looking to make redundant all disabled employees who were previously employed under the Work Choice Programme. Can the Executive Member for Finance also inform us if this Council has any co-hosted posts under this scheme that will now be under threat and what are the financial implications for this Council?

Response from Cllr Lynch

Thank you Cllr Lay for this question. I can confirm that Leicestershire County Council is currently consulting with all disabled staff who are affected by this decision which is part of the County Council's cost reduction programme. This Council has one post that will be affected by this decision. The arrangement with the County Council to host this post started in 1989, initially under the Sheltered Placement Scheme. This has since changed to the Workstep grant and subsequently to the Work Choice Programme. Officers of this Council are currently in discussions with the County Council to clarify the employment status of this post. I can assure Cllr Lay that we will be doing everything we can to safeguard this post but the impact of retaining this post will be around £10,000.

By way of a supplementary question and following expressing his alarm at the rumoured 600+ job losses that could result from the withdrawal of this funding, Cllr Lay asked if HBBC would look to ensure that any individuals based at this authority under the scheme could continue their employment and that the County Council be lobbied regarding withdrawal of such important funding. In response, Cllr Lynch stated that the number of employees affected across Leicestershire was in fact 42, and that the possibility of retaining the affected post at HBBC was already being investigated. He also confirmed that the matter would be taken up with Leicestershire County Council.

196 LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S POSITION STATEMENT

In his position statement the Leader referred to the financial position of the council, expressed his disappointment regarding the delay in progress with City Deals, sent his best wishes to Tim Norton, encouraged Members to sign the petition to keep Richard III in Leicestershire and provided an update on the negotiations with regard to Mallory Park.

Lead Members from the other group responded to the position statement, echoing many of the Leader's points but also expressing concern regarding the future financial position of the authority from 2015 onwards.

197 THE MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION MEETINGS HELD ON 4 JULY AND 29 AUGUST 2013

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission introduced the minutes of the previous two meetings for information.

198 CLEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD STRATEGY

Members were informed of the Clean Neighbourhood Strategy which had been updated for adoption following restructure of the street cleansing and neighbourhood warden services. It was noted from a national survey that the service provided by the Council was:

- one of the top 25% of best performing Councils,
- the sixth lowest costing service;
- second quarter of best performing Councils for customer satisfaction;
- nominated for the APSE best street cleansing service award.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- The loss of five mechanical sweepers which had been purchased in 2008;
- The problem of serving notices to clean up land when the owner of the land could not be contacted;
- The possibility of taking action against residents whose refuse and/or recycling bins were kept permanently on the street;
- The provision of road sweeping dates/times to town and parish councils for their assistance in moving cars off the road in order to facilitate cleaning;
- The problem of bins not being returned to the exact property from which they were removed for emptying and of the internal recycling caddy being damaged during emptying.

A member commended the street cleansing staff, namely the team in Barwell, for their hard work. Members confirmed that they were generally proud of the service provision.

It was moved by Councillor Bray, seconded by Councillor Bill, and

RESOLVED – the Clean Neighbourhood Strategy be adopted.

199 SCRAP METAL DEALERS ACT 2013

Members were informed of the licensing requirements of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 and the associated changes to the scheme of delegation and licensing fees. Members hoped that metal theft would be reduced as a result of the new Act. It was moved by Councillor Gould, seconded by Councillor Nichols and

RESOLVED –

- (a) the charges of £280 for a new site and collector's licence and £180 for a variation of licence be approved;
- (b) all contested applications be considered by a Licensing Panel consisting of three members of the Licensing Regulatory Committee;
- (c) the Authorised Officers for enforcement of the legislation be approved as follows:
 - Principal Licensing Officer;
 - Licensing & Compliance Officer;
 - Environmental Health Officers;
 - Environmental Health Technical Officers;
 - Chief Officer (Environmental Health);
 - Environmental Health Manager (Commercial).

200 MOVEMENT TO RESERVES - REQUEST FOR DELEGATED AUTHORITY

This item was withdrawn from the agenda and would be given consideration by Scrutiny Commission.

201 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2012-13

The Annual Governance Statement and the Statement of Accounts were presented and discussed together. In response to Members' comments and questions, the following points were made:

- Stock data work in the Orchard system had been necessary as the historical information had to be physically checked and manually updated. Officers agreed to provide the cost of this to members;
- Sickness absence was monitored closely by the Chief Executive and by managers and there was a reporting process for sickness when home working;
- Despite the implementation of 'bedroom tax', the hardship fund was showing an underspend and had not been accessed as much as had been anticipated;
- A further report on Hinckley Club for Young People would be brought before the Finance, Audit & Performance Committee following the request for the club to provide a forward forecast.

Reference was also made to:

- The high quality of training that had been delivered to members of the Finance, Audit & Performance Committee;
- Disappointment at Hinckley Club for Young People not accepting the offer of HBBC's audit services;
- The unqualified opinion that would be provided by the external Auditor.

It was moved by Councillor Lynch, seconded by Councillor Bray and

RESOLVED – the Annual Governance Statement 2012/13 be approved.

202 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2012-13

The Statement of Accounts 2012/13 had been presented and debated with the Annual Governance Statement (the previous minute refers). It was moved by Councillor Lynch and seconded by Councillor Bray that the Statement of Accounts be approved.

Councillor Lynch, along with eight other members, stood to request that voting on the Statement of Accounts be recorded. The vote was taken as follows:

Councillors Bannister, Batty, Bill, Bray, Camamile, Cartwright, Chastney, Gould, Mrs Hall, Mr Hall, Hodgkins, Hulbert, Inman, Lay, Lynch, Mayne, Moore, Morrell, Mullaney, Nichols, Richards, Smith, Sprason, Taylor, Ward and Witherford voted FOR the motion (26);

Councillor Boothby abstained from voting.

203 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

Members were provided with the report of the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances and were also advised of the recommendations of the Scrutiny Commission on 29 August 2013 which had been endorsed by the Executive on 11 September.

The report of the Independent Panel had identified that members of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council received lower allowances than members of many other authorities and had recommended increases in all basic and special responsibility allowances.

Whilst members welcomed the recommendations of the Independent Panel and acknowledged the increase in their level of responsibility and workload, they felt that in light of the current economic climate, the pay freezes or low pay rises in public and private sector and the reduction in benefits to many residents, they could not accept an increase in the basic allowance and the special responsibility allowances.

With regard to the allowances for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, all Members who had previously undertaken these roles stated that the cost to the individual whilst carrying out the role was far higher than the sum received in allowances, resulting in a high level of personal expenditure which may prevent some members putting themselves forward to be Mayor. It was also felt that the financial pressure was often as apparent during the year as Deputy Mayor as it was during the term as Mayor. The recommendations to increase the allowances for the Mayor and Deputy were therefore supported. It was also felt that the allowances should be reviewed annually.

It was moved by Councillor Witherford, seconded by Councillor Lay and

RESOLVED –

- (i) the recommendations of the Independent Panel for increases in members' allowances be welcomed;
- (ii) the increase in allowances for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor be approved;
- (iii) the increase in all other allowances be not approved.
- (iv) The level of allowances be reviewed annually.

204 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

The following motion had received from Councillor Inman, seconded by Councillor Gould, in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 13.1 and 13.2:

“Council notes with regret the current decline in the number of public houses operating within the Borough and nationally, and supports moves to keep as many community public houses open as possible. As one method of achieving this the Chief Executive is instructed to write to the Secretary of State supporting action under the Sustainable Communities Act to ensure that planning permission is required before community pubs are converted into betting shops, supermarkets, pay-day loan stores or other uses or are allowed to be demolished.

Council notes that if this can be achieved the Council as planning authority would be able to decide applications as to whether community pubs should be demolished or converted into other uses and this action could save many community pubs in both the urban and rural areas. The Chief Executive is also instructed to write to our Members of Parliament asking them to support this proposal.”

During debate, it was noted that many public houses provided community facilities and were an essential part of villages and communities. It was reported that an average of 26 pubs were closing each week, they could be demolished without requiring planning permission and many were run down. It was felt that breweries could be partly

responsible due to the high charges imposed on landlords and it was suggested that this problem also needed to be addressed.

It was moved by Councillor Inman, seconded by Councillor Gould and

RESOLVED – the motion be supported.

205 PLANNING COMMITTEE - MEMBERSHIP

An amendment to the membership of the Planning Committee, namely Councillor Boothby to replace Councillor Smith, was put to the meeting. Upon being put to the vote the amendment was REFUSED and it was therefore

RESOLVED – the membership of Planning Committee remain unchanged.

(The Meeting closed at 8.40 pm)

MAYOR