

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

11 JULY 2017 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: MR LJP O'SHEA - MAYOR  
MRS J KIRBY – DEPUTY MAYOR

Mr RG Allen, Mr DC Bill MBE, Mr CW Boothby, Mr SL Bray,  
Mrs R Camamile, Mrs MA Cook, Mr DS Cope, Mrs GAW Cope,  
Mr WJ Crooks, Mr MA Hall, Mrs L Hodgkins, Mr E Hollick, Mr C Ladkin,  
Mr MR Lay, Mr KWP Lynch, Mr K Morrell, Mr K Nichols,  
Mr M Nickerson, Mrs J Richards, Mr RB Roberts, Mrs MJ Surtees,  
Mr BE Sutton, Mr P Wallace, Mr R Ward, Mr HG Williams and  
Ms BM Witherford

Officers in attendance: Bill Cullen, Julie Kenny, Rebecca Owen, Caroline Roffey, Sharon Stacey and Ashley Wilson

64 PRAYER

Prayer was offered by Reverend Pollard.

65 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Bessant, Cartwright, Smith, Taylor and Wright.

66 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was moved by Councillor Crooks, seconded by Councillor Nichols and

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meetings held on 21 March and 16 May 2017 be approved and signed by the Mayor.

67 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

68 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor referred to recent events that he had attended and the achievement of Fairtrade Borough status again.

Mrs Anderson, Deputy Chairman of the Leicestershire & Rutland Magistrates, presented a tapestry to the Council. The tapestry commemorated the opening of the new courthouse in Hinckley in 2000 and every serving magistrate at that time had contributed to the stitching of it. The tapestry hung in the main entrance of the courthouse until its closure in 2016 and was now being presented to the Council for safekeeping.

69 QUESTIONS

(a) Question from Councillor Bray to the Leader of the Council

“In his recent County Council election bid, the Leader of the Council in his literature told residents that “Garden villages are being considered for future new homes away from existing settlements”. Could he inform the Council and local residents where these new homes will be located?”

Response from Councillor Hall

“The simple answer is “no”, because it is not for me to decide where these developments should be, it is for the people of this borough, but I will make sure that this Council puts in place a plan for future housing.

The current site allocations are driven by the direction of housing growth towards the extension of our existing urban areas and larger rural settlements. This will deliver our new housing requirements to 2026, but we need to provide for more new homes beyond that date.

I know that the majority of people recognise the need for building additional homes, especially affordable homes, but residents do not want to see the uncontrolled expansion of their towns and villages eating into the valuable green spaces around them. So we are working towards an alternative which can be supported by residents and delivered by developers.

We have achieved and continue to maintain a five year housing land supply, this provides us with protection against speculative development, and has been upheld through several developer appeals. We have an adopted site allocations document to fulfil the remaining requirement to 2026, with many sites already granted planning consent.

We have started the process of reviewing our Local Plan and have worked with county colleagues towards an agreed Strategic Growth Plan, which will provide evidence for our growth needs. We have undertaken some early workshops on options which have shown a wide variety of views in where homes could and should be delivered. This also highlights areas that we should protect and not build, these sites include land immediately surrounding some of our larger settlements.

Through our promotion of the need for neighbourhood development plans (NDPs), we are engaging with communities across the borough so that they can have their voice. We have provided additional funding to support communities across the borough with advice to help them to develop NDPs and have already driven a significant increase in the number of communities developing plans. These plans will give local people the opportunity to identify the growth in housing that they need, and the infrastructure growth that is needed to go with it.

Once officers bring all of these details together, there is likely to be a gap between what is required by existing communities and what is required for growth to 2036 and beyond. One option that is being considered to deliver this growth is the creation of garden villages. I personally believe this option to be of great value and if we can create more villages with an appropriate level of infrastructure we can deliver some fantastic new places to live, rather than destroying the ones that we already have.”

(b) Question from Councillor Witherford to the Executive member for Environmental Health

“I would refer to the discussion at the Council meeting on Thursday, 23 February, in regard to the charge for reported rat infestations, when budgets were discussed. We are now getting a considerable amount of sightings of rats running through and around gardens and properties in the urban area. Residents who have reported this to the council have withdrawn their enquiry when advised that they would incur a cost of £20 to take this further. They see no reason why they should pay this amount when the rats were not nesting on their property but migrating from other surrounding sites.

In the interest of public health in general and as a gesture of this council’s commitment to protecting the health and safety of its residents, I would once again ask if the Executive member of this administration with this responsibility will consider withdrawing the charge that has been imposed and cover the costs incurred for this service from an alternative budget”.

Response from Councillor Morrell

“I thank Councillor Witherford for her question and I can assure her of this council’s continued commitment to protecting the public health as a whole and the health and safety of our residents. I am concerned if residents are being affected by rodent infestation caused by other sources. However, if residents see a rat in their garden we can provide them with a pest control service for £20 or free to those in receipt of certain benefits (£20 is still a highly subsidised cost compared to those charged by private pest control contractors and represents very good value for the comprehensive treatment received) or if they can identify a local source of the infestation, for example an accumulation of domestic waste, then a service request can be raised with Environmental Health (Pollution) who will investigate under public health legislation.

I can confirm that officers have observed an increase in service requests relating to matters that could include rodent infestations (for example domestic accumulations) over the last four years. The gradual increase began prior to the introduction of charging for rat treatments and therefore cannot be attributed to the charge. There will always be natural fluctuations in rodent populations which can be caused by external factors such as the climate. It is very natural to see populations, and as a consequence numbers of service requests, fluctuate over years. As long as we are providing a treatment service for those that want to pay and an investigation service into matters relating to rat infestations I feel that we are providing adequate protection to public health.

I will continue to monitor the situation but at the current time am not minded to reintroduce a free service; something which is very rare for local authorities to provide in today’s financial climate”.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Witherford asked if the Executive member would be able to monitor certain roads where there had been a large number of complaints. Councillor Morrell confirmed that he would arrange for this.

(c) Question from Councillor DS Cope to the Executive member for Cultural Services

“Could the Executive member advise why the very popular and well attended Proms in the Park does not appear to be included in the events for this year. Both my wife and myself have been approached by many past attendees who live on

the estate and beyond and are disappointed to see that no mention has been made of an event this year”.

Response from Councillor Cook

“Thank you for your question regarding events, especially Proms in the Park.

I am pleased to announce that 2017 represents the busiest events programme the council has undertaken. An uplift in the core budget aligned to events has helped us to achieve this. The economic benefits are well documented, with a 25% increase in footfall which supports the economic vitality of Hinckley’s town centre. Financial support to our rural event is also being rolled out.

Unfortunately, the lead performer of Proms in the Park, John Cleveland Orchestra, has disbanded. Alternative performers were sought but were not forthcoming. This coupled with a significant drop in attendance (88% over the past few years\*) provided the opportunity for the multi agency events sub group to reallocated the aligned budget to new and exciting projects. Our key delivery partners, Friends of Hollycroft Park, have a wonderful events package on offer this season.

I’m sure all members recognise and support the diverse, high quality events package and its ability to attract visitors to our town and village centres”.

*\* Note: In 2010, we attracted 2,400 attendees to Proms in the Park. This had dropped to just 300 last year. Poor weather has played a part, but the number has fallen year on year.*

## 70 LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S POSITION STATEMENT

In his position statement, the Leader referred to the sad loss of life at Grenfell Tower and recent terrorist attacks in London and Manchester. Members echoed these sentiments and supported the proposal for a report to the Scrutiny Commission on implications for this council.

## 71 MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

The minutes of the Scrutiny Commission meetings were received for information.

## 72 PROCUREMENT OF FLEET

Consideration was given to a report which requested supplementary budgets for procurement of a replacement vehicle fleet. The procurement process would inform the decision on whether to lease or purchase the fleet. Some concern was expressed in relation to the uncertain future of diesel vehicles and it was agreed that consideration would be given to feasibility of electric vehicles for the smaller vehicles.

It was requested that the report should be brought to the Scrutiny Commission for review of the outcomes of the procurement exercise to inform the decision to purchase or lease the fleet, although the tight timescales were noted.

Concern was expressed about potential parking problems should staff take the vehicle home with them. In response it was noted that there was sufficient parking for all of the larger vehicles on site and acknowledged that the parking of some vehicles at home enabled operatives to work more efficiently. Members were assured that, for those vehicles that were taken home, employees were asked to park considerately.

It was moved by Councillor Nickerson, seconded by Councillor Allen and

RESOLVED –

- (i) Procurement of the vehicle fleet and the associated supplementary budgets as follows, be approved:
  - (a) A supplementary capital budget of £3,855,500 for fleet and equipment procurement;
  - (b) A supplementary capital budget of £82,100 for the procurement of retained vehicles which is to be funded from the grounds machinery reserve;
  - (c) A supplementary revenue budget of £609,004 for the annual financing cost which will replace the current revenue budget of £396,000;
  - (d) An increase in the council's capital financing requirement of £3,855,500 to allow the purchase.
- (ii) The decision on purchase and/or lease of fleet and equipment be delegated to the relevant officer in consultation with the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services.

73 REVENUE & CAPITAL OUTTURN 2016/17

Members were informed of the financial outturn for 2016/17. The reasons for the underspend were queried and it was noted that it related to natural staff turnover and resulting vacancies, the corporate management restructure and increase in income from business rates.

In response to a question on the delay in relation to the completion of some evidence based work linked to the new Local Plan, it was agreed that members would be updated on the new timeline for completion.

On the motion of Councillor Hall, seconded by Councillor Surtees, it was

RESOLVED –

- (i) The outturn for 2016/17 be approved;
- (ii) The transfers to earmarked reserves and balances be approved;
- (iii) The revenue carry forwards of expenditure and income to 2017/18 be approved;
- (iv) The housing revenue and housing repairs account outturn for 2016/17 and transfers to and from balances be approved;
- (v) The draft capital programme outturn for the general fund and housing revenue account from 2016/17 be approved;
- (vi) The HRA carry forwards be approved;
- (vii) The capital carry forwards be approved.

74 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION 2017

Members gave consideration to the revised constitution which had been rewritten to simplify and update the document. Members who had taken part in the Constitution Working Group and officers who had worked on the document were thanked. It was moved by Councillor Hall, seconded by Councillor Wallace and

RESOLVED – the revised constitution be adopted.

(The Meeting closed at 7.35 pm)

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MAYOR