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Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

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

Date: 11 December 2019

To: **Members of the Scrutiny Commission**

Mr MR Lay (Chairman)
Mr C Ladkin (Vice-Chairman)
Mr P Williams (Vice-Chairman)
Mr JMT Collett
Mr DS Cope
Mrs MJ Crooks

Mr SM Gibbens
Ms A Pendlebury
Mr MC Sheppard-Bools
Mr R Webber-Jones
Mr HG Williams

Copy to all other Members of the Council

(other recipients for information)

Dear member,

There will be a meeting of the **SCRUTINY COMMISSION** in the De Montfort Suite, Hinckley Hub on **THURSDAY, 19 DECEMBER 2019** at **6.30 pm** and your attendance is required.

The agenda for the meeting is set out overleaf.

Yours sincerely

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

Rebecca Owen
Democratic Services Manager

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- *There are two escape routes from the Council Chamber – at the side and rear. Leave via the door closest to you.*
- Proceed to **Willowbank Road car park**, accessed from Rugby Road then Willowbank Road.
- **Do not** use the lifts.
- **Do not** stop to collect belongings.

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Thank you

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 19 DECEMBER 2019

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

2. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 4)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2019.

3. ADDITIONAL URGENT BUSINESS BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

To be advised of any additional items of business which the Chairman decides by reason of special circumstances shall be taken as matters of urgency at this meeting.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive verbally from members any disclosures which they are required to make in accordance with the Council's code of conduct or in pursuance of Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. **This is in addition to the need for such disclosure to be also given when the relevant matter is reached on the agenda.**

5. QUESTIONS

To hear any questions in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.

6. VARIATIONS TO SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS

Presentation in response to a request from members.

7. PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER (Pages 5 - 16)

To seek endorsement for three new Public Space Protection Orders for Hinckley & Bosworth.

8. LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICTS COUNCIL TAX PERFORMANCE REVIEW (Pages 17 - 28)

To provide an update and overview of council tax collection performance in response to a request of members.

9. SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2019-20/21 (Pages 29 - 32)

Draft work programme attached.

10. MINUTES OF FINANCE & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY (Pages 33 - 34)

For information.

11. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH AS MATTERS OF URGENCY

As announced under item 3.

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HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

3 OCTOBER 2019 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr MR Lay - Chairman
Mr C Ladkin and Mr P Williams – Vice-Chairman

Mr JMT Collett, Mr DS Cope, Mrs MJ Crooks, Mr SM Gibbens, Ms A Pendlebury,
Mr MC Sheppard-Bools and Mr R Webber-Jones

Officers in attendance: Bill Cullen, Edwina Grant, Stephen Meynell, Rebecca Owen,
Madeline Shellard, Sharon Stacey and Ashley Wilson

163 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor H Williams. It was also noted that Councillor Webber-Jones would be late.

164 MINUTES

It was moved by Councillor P Williams, seconded by Councillor Sheppard-Bools and

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 22 August 2019 be confirmed and signed by the chairman.

165 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

166 HINCKLEY HEALTH SERVICES REVIEW

Representatives of the CCG and The Alliance (the healthcare provider) updated on the future of care services in Hinckley. It was noted that the pre-consultation business case was being developed for approval by NHS England, after which the plans would go out to public consultation. Following the consultation, an outline and a full business case would be prepared. This was likely to be 12-18 months from now.

During the presentation and discussion, the following points were noted:

- Funding from with UHL's capital expenditure programme was being explored in order to replace the x-ray unit within Hinckley but this would be a decision for UHL, who had already earmarked the funding
- The possibility of a mobile x-ray unit was being explored
- X-ray patients were having to travel to other facilities, but this had not resulted in increased waiting times
- If new x-ray equipment could be funded, it would be at least 3-6 months before it was operational
- Public transport to healthcare facilities outside of Hinckley was poor
- The future plans would see endoscopy and day case beds moving to the community hospital, displacing the current beds (most of which were not used by local residents) to other facilities
- S106 money could potentially go towards x-ray facilities if specified as part of the agreement.

Councillor Webber-Jones arrived at 6.46pm.

It was suggested that HBBC could provide the CCG with a loan to purchase the x-ray equipment and agreed that this would be considered further with NHS England.

167 COUNCIL TAX - LOCAL DISCOUNTS AND PREMIUMS

Members received a report which recommended changes to council tax discounts and premiums as follows:

- An increased charge for long-term empty properties to 100%, and the maximum allowed under legislation where possible up to 300% for properties empty more than ten years
- A reduction in the major repairs discount from 50% to zero
- Removal of the one month empty property discount.

Members supported the ambition of encouraging bringing empty properties back into use and also noted the loss in New Homes Bonus as a result of a high number of empty properties. It was noted that there was still discretion for example following bereavement.

Councillor Ladkin arrived at 7.22pm.

Whilst in support of the first recommendation, members did not support the reduction of the major repairs discount or the removal of the one month empty property discount. They felt that if major work was being undertaken, this was beneficial in order to bring the property back into use and should not be discouraged and suggested it may discourage people from purchasing a property that required work.

RESOLVED –

- (i) The increased premium charge for long-term empty properties be supported and RECOMMENDED to Council;
- (ii) The Executive member for Finance be RECOMMENDED to reconsider recommendations 2 and 3 before bringing a report to Council.

168 BUSINESS RATES PILOT - PROPOSED SPEND

An update on the areas of proposed spend on schemes to be funded from the HBBC share of the business rate pilot gain was provided, along with a recommendation to Council to approve the expenditure budget and use of the business rate equalisation reserve. Attention was drawn to the other funding streams to be accessed and bids that had been submitted towards the projects listed.

Concern was expressed that the majority of the projects were focussed on Hinckley. In response, it was explained that a joint district bid had been submitted to the LLEP for a county-wide scheme that could see electric charging points provided across the borough and the funding for variable message signs in Hinckley was linked to a developer contribution specifically for that purpose.

It was noted that the CCTV item included some provision for CCTV in rural areas.

Members supported that provision of a central rural pot of funding to allow parish councils to request funding towards initiatives.

In relation specifically to the electric car charging points, it was requested that this be part of a wider plan to introduce them in all council-owned car parks across the borough and that a report be brought to the next meeting to show delivery of charging points across the borough.

RESOLVED –

- (i) The report be welcomed;
- (ii) Concerns raised about the projects benefitting only the Hinckley area be noted;
- (iii) A report be brought to the next meeting with plans for roll out of electric car charging points across the borough.

169 HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

The Scrutiny Commission was briefed on the approval of the Housing Allocations Policy in February 2018 by the Executive and progress in relation to implementation of the new IT system. It was noted that due to the changes in the policy, everyone on the register would need to re-apply but would be supported to do this.

Members were pleased to see the greater weight being given to local connection in the new policy.

RESOLVED – the briefing be noted and a progress report be brought in six months.

170 SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2019-2021

Members were updated on the outcome of the prioritisation exercise to inform the work programme. It was noted that the chairman and vice-chairmen would meet to discuss and to create the work programme.

171 MINUTES OF FINANCE & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY

The minutes were received for information and it was noted that it had been a positive meeting with a lot of debate.

172 CORPORATE PLAN 2017 - 2021 ANNUAL STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Members received a report containing outcomes of an exercise to identify the key priorities with the corporate plan. It was noted that the aims and objectives within the plan hadn't changed, but this exercise added detail of how these would be achieved.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

173 OFF STREET PARKING PLACES ORDER - VARIATION OF CHARGING TIMES

Consideration was given to the proposal to vary the Off Street Parking Places Order to provide 133 spaces prior to 8.30am to support residents where there is limited on street parking and 264 free parking spaces after 3pm to support Hinckley town centre. It was noted that the costs would be funded from the special expenses area budget.

RESOLVED – the report be supported and RECOMMENDED to Council subject to comments of the Hinckley Area Committee.

174 OFF STREET CAR PARKING ORDER - HOUSING LAND

The Scrutiny Commission received a report which recommended amendments to the Off Street Parking Places Order to control parking on designated HBBC housing land. It was explained that distress had been caused to residents in Westfield Court, Castle Court and Royal Court residents car parks due to nuisance parking and in one case an ambulance with a patient on board had been blocked in. It was noted that consultation would take place with residents on the best way of controlling parking before the variation being made.

On a separate matter, the issue of parking problems in rural areas was raised and it was hoped that the particular problems around schools may be helped when the pavement parking legislation is implemented. It was highlighted that many cars leave their engines running, which was in breach of legislation implemented in 2017.

RESOLVED – the report be welcomed and RECOMMENDED to Council.

(The Meeting closed at 8.30 pm)

CHAIRMAN



Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND DECISION MAKING

Scrutiny Commission	19 December 2019
Council	14 January 2020

WARDS AFFECTED: All

PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER

Report of Director Environment and Planning

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek endorsement for three new Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's) for the borough of Hinckley and Bosworth.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Commission note the contents of the report and support the proposed three new orders.
- i. Order 1: ban the use across the whole of the borough, of consuming intoxicating substances or new psychoactive substances (legal highs) on public land. A person will commit an offence if they fail to surrender any alcohol when ordered to do so by an authorised Officer on public land.
 - ii. Order 2: dog control issues on public land including a requirement to remove and correctly dispose of dog faeces, failing to put a dog on a lead when instructed to do so by an authorised officer, and the banning of dogs / requirement to have dogs on leads in specific locations detailed in 3.5 and 3.6 below.
 - iii. Order 3: green space issues relating to specific sites including the banning of fires and barbecues, restrict the use of remote controlled vehicles, aircraft and motorcycling, and failing to leave a park at closing time when requested to do so. Specific sites and restrictions are detailed in 3.9 and 3.10.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (c.12) permits HBBC to create PSPO's which are designed to stop individuals or groups committing anti social behaviour in a public space and they are to run for 3 years. The current order

was introduced in December 2016 and expires in December 2019. The Council may make a PSPO if satisfied that two conditions are met (Section 59 of the Act):

1. That the activities have taken place, or that are they likely to be taking place, in a public place within the authority's area and have had, or are likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality; and
 2. That the effect, or likely effect, of the activities:
 - i) Is, or is likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature;
 - ii) Is, or is likely to be, such as to make the activities unreasonable; and
 - iii) Justifies the restrictions imposed by the order.
- 3.2 All parish councils were invited to add controls for their land into the Borough Councils PSPO and at their request nine are included: Bagworth & Thornton, Markfield, Newbold Verdon, Peckleton, Ratby, Sheepy, Stanton Under Bardon, Twycross and Witherley.
- 3.3 Before extending and amending the order the Council must consult with the local police, land owners / occupiers, and any community representative deemed appropriate. The Borough Council and relevant parish councils ran a 6 week public consultation for the period 2nd September to 11th October. The consultation was advertised on all the affected sites, and included an on line questionnaire as well as face to face interviews on all the proposals. Given the consultation responses officers recommend the Borough Council replace the previous order with 3 separate orders, each covering a different issue.

The consultation responses showed overwhelming support for the controls proposed and are shown in full in Appendix 1. Percentages of on line respondents supporting each control are given in brackets within the description of each order below.

Order 1: Intoxicating substances

- 3.4 This order will continue the controls in the 2016 order and ban the use across the whole of the borough, of consuming intoxicating substances or new psychoactive substances (legal highs) on public land. A person will commit an offence if they fail to surrender any alcohol when ordered to do so by an authorised Officer on public land. (95% support).

Order 2: Dog control issues

- 3.5 This order will continue the controls in the 2016 order:-
- Across the whole of the borough, to require dog faeces to be removed and correctly disposed of when in charge of a dog on public land (99% support)
 - Failing to put a dog on a lead in a public place when instructed to do so by a HBBC council officer (92% support)
 - Not allowing dogs within children's play areas or multi use games areas(except of medical exemptions, (HBBC land only) (94% support)
 - To require that dogs are kept on leads in the following areas
 - Ashby road cemetery Hinckley (96% support)
 - Hollycroft Park bandstand arena (87% support)
 - Hollycroft Park Pitch and Putt course (88% support)

3.6 The following new additions will be made:-

- Failing to put a dog on a lead in a public place when instructed to do so by a parish council officer in Bagworth & Thornton, Markfield, Newbold Verdon, Peckleton, Ratby, Sheepy, Stanton Under Bardon, Twycross and Witherley (support ranged from 86% to 94% in the different parishes).
- Not allowing dogs within children's play areas or multi use games areas(except of medical exemptions) in Bagworth & Thornton, Markfield, Peckleton, Ratby, Sheepy, Stanton Under Bardon (support ranged from 86% to 96% in the different parishes)
- To require that dogs are kept on leads in the following areas
 - Holy Rood church, Bagworth (93% support)
 - St Peters Church, Thornton (93% support)
 - Playing field, Foxes Covert, Fenny Drayton (74% support)
 - Playing fields, Ormes Lane, Radcliffe Culey (76% support)
 - Markfield community park, Mayflower close (60% support)
 - The bowling green, tennis courts and surrounding area at Hollycroft Park Hinckley (91% supportive)
 - To prohibit dogs from the Memorial Playing field, Church road, Witherley (excluding dogs used for medical reasons) (78% support)

3.7 Although supported by the public, the order will not include the requirement for dogs to be kept on leads in the following areas:

- All public footpaths and highways in Hinckley (69%)
- All sports pitches but only when in use for officiated sporting matters (86-94% support)

3.8 These requirements are difficult to effectively define and the existing enforcement resources are insufficient to manage their enforcement. Where there are problems of this nature then officers can enforce using the existing control of failing to put a dog on a lead in a public place when instructed to do so by a HBBC council officer (92% support). Officers will monitor this issue and if necessary in the future recommend amendments to the order.

Order 3: Green spaces issues (appendix 4)

3.9 This order will continue the controls from the 2016 order:

- To prohibit the lighting of fires and barbecues in a park or open space managed by HBBC without the consent of the council (91% supportive)
- To restrict use of remote controlled model vehicles, aircraft and motorcycling that are causing a nuisance in a park or open space managed by HBBC (92% supportive)
- Failing to leave a park managed by HBBC at the closing time or when required to do so, by a council officer or a police officer (95% supportive)

3.10 The following new additions will be made:-

- To prohibit the lighting of fires and barbecues and camping in a park or open space managed by following parish councils without the consent of the relevant Parish council: Bagworth & Thornton, Witherley, Twycross, Stanton under Bardon, Ratby, Peckleton, Sheepy and Markfield (support ranged from 83-90% in different parishes)

- To restrict use of remote controlled model vehicles, aircrafts and motorcycling that are causing a nuisance in a park or open space managed by the following parish councils Bagworth & Thornton, Witherley, Twycross, Stanton under Bardon, Ratby, Peckleton, Sheepy, Newbold Verdon and Markfield (support ranged from 80-98% in different parishes)
 - Failing to leave a park managed by the following parish councils at the closing time or when required to do so, by a council officer or a police officer Bagworth & Thornton, Witherley, Twycross, Stanton under Bardon, Ratby, Peckleton, Sheepy and Markfield. (support ranged from 89-96%)
 - To prohibit riding horses or the use of horse traps (carriages) in a park or open space managed by Bagworth & Thornton without the consent of the Parish council (87% supportive)
 - To prohibit the playing or practicing of golf in a park or open space managed by Peckleton without the consent of the council. (82% supportive)
 - To prohibit horses from using a park or open space managed by Peckleton without the consent of the Parish (79% supportive)
 - To prohibit parking of any type of vehicle on the green space on Mallory Close, Newbold Verdon (91% supportive).
- 3.11 Those failing to comply with the PSPO can be issued with a fixed penalty notice of £100 which is reduced to £80 if paid within 14 days. For those who fail to pay then prosecution has a maximum fine of at level 3 (£1000) and this would be determined by the courts.
- 3.12 Fixed penalty notices can be issued by authorised HBBC officers in the clean neighbourhoods and antisocial behaviour team. Where required HBBC will authorise suitable parish council officers to issue fixed penalty notices. It will be for each parish council to provide the staff resources to enforce their PSPO restrictions but HBBC will support parishes where they have capacity to do so. This will be at the discretion of the Head of Street Scene Services.
4. EXEMPTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES
- 4.1 This report is to be heard in public session.
5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [AG]
- 5.1 The cost of additional signage on HBBC owned sites is estimated at £100 and these costs will be met from existing resources.
- 5.2 The cost of signage on parish land will need to be covered by the relevant parish council.
- 5.3 Income from enforcement is difficult to predict and as such no increase is forecast at present.
6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [ST]
- 6.1 The legal implications of the extension, addition and variation of PSPOs have been incorporated within the body of the report in section 3.

7. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The PSPO supports the following corporate plan aims:

- People: take measure to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour and protect people from harm
- Places: Keep our borough clean and green, Make our neighbourhoods safer and Protect and improve our parks and open spaces for everyone
- Prosperity: Support our rural communities

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 The following organisations were all consulted: where a response was received it is noted.

- Leicestershire Police
 - Parish and Town Councils
 - The Kennel Club
 - Residents in Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
 - Borough Councillors at Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
 - Face to face surveys on affected sites
 - Hinckley & Bosworth Staff survey
 - Friends of Hollycroft website and social media (800 followers)
 - Hinckley BID members 1000+
 - VCS Database
- noted-
- Leicestershire Police – Lord Bach “supported completely”
 - Parish and Town Councils
 - The Kennel Club - Supportive
 - Residents in Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
 - Borough Councillors at Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
 - Face to face surveys on affected sites
 - Hinckley & Bosworth Staff survey
 - Friends of Hollycroft website and social media (800 followers)
 - Hinckley BID members 1000+
 - VCS Database

8.2 Nearly 400 people responded to the online consultation and over 300 people completed face to face questionnaires as detailed in 3.4. Full results are given in appendix 1.

9. RISK IMPLICATIONS

9.1 It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

9.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

- 9.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Incorrect drafting of the order	Ensure order correctly drafted	Legal services
Failure to enforce PSPO / manage expectations that all controls can be enforced	HBBC to be clear about what we can and cannot do to parishes, and where appropriate to authorise suitable parish council officers to enforce the PSPO	Caroline Roffey / Maddy Shellard

10. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 All parish councils were invited to add restrictions to the PSPO and nine did so. Those which are being added reflect the issues and concerns in those parishes and are supported by the residents of those parishes.
- 10.2 The restriction of dogs includes an exemption for dogs required on medical grounds e.g. guide dogs, hearing dogs etc.
- 10.3 Exemptions apply to the order for people who are blind, or have a disability which affects their ability to comply with the order.

11. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:
- Community Safety implications
 - Environmental implications
 - ICT implications
 - Asset Management implications
 - Procurement implications
 - Human Resources implications
 - Planning implications
 - Data Protection implications
 - Voluntary Sector

Background papers: Appendix 1: consultation results

Contact Officer: Lisa Kirby / Caroline Roffey
Executive Member: Councillor Bill Crooks

Appendix 1: Consultation responses

Borough wide responses

Table 1 - Order 1 : on line consultation only	Supportive	Total number of responses
Across the whole of the borough, to continue the ban of consuming intoxicating substances including alcohol or new psychoactive substances (legal highs)	95%	378

Table 2 - Order 2 : on line consultation only	Supportive	Total number of responses
Across the whole of the borough, to require dog faeces to be removed and correctly disposed of when in charge of a dog. (excluding private land)	99%	378

Hinckley responses

Table 3 – order 2 and 3	On line responses		On site responses	
Hinckley responses	Supportive	Total number of responses	Supportive	Total number of responses
To prohibit the lighting of fires and barbecues in a park or open space managed by HBBC without the consent of the council.	91%	321	92%	208
To restrict use of remote controlled model vehicles, aircraft and motorcycling that are causing a nuisance in a park or open space managed by HBBC	92%	317	97%	209
Failing to leave a park managed by HBBC at the closing time or when required to do so, by a council officer or a police officer	95%	307	99	207

Failing to put a dog on a lead in a public open space, when instructed to do so by a council officer	92%	322	99	209
Not allowing dogs within children's play areas or multi use games areas (except for medical exemptions, HBBC land only)	94%	302	97	209
To require that dogs are kept on leads in the following areas:				
Ashby Road Cemetery	96%	292	97	202
Hollycroft Park bandstand arena	87%	300	94	194
Hollycroft Park Pitch and Putt	88%	301	96	195
The bowling green, tennis courts and the surrounding areas at Hollycroft Park	91%	301	95	195
All public footpaths and highways	69%	305	79	206
All sports pitches, but only when in use for officiated sporting matters	92%	304	99	208

Parish responses

Table 4 – Order 2 / 3	BAGWORTH AND THORNTON		B & T on site		WITHERLEY		TWYXCROSS		STANTON UB		RATBY	
Parish responses Responses are on line unless other wise indicated	Supportive	Total number of responses	Supportive	Total number of responses	Supportive	Total number of responses	Supportive	Total number of responses	Supportive	Total number of responses	Supportive	Total number of responses
To prohibit the lighting of fires and barbecues and camping in a park or open space managed by XXX without the consent of the Parish council.	90%	98	100	14	87%	47	89%	45	88%	41	90%	50
To restrict use of remote controlled model vehicles, aircrafts and motorcycling that are causing a nuisance in a park or open space managed by XXX	90%	97	100	14	85%	47	84%	38	87%	40	90%	51
Failing to leave a park managed by XXX at the closing time or when required to do so, by a council officer or a police officer	96%	92	100	14	96%	47	95%	42	97%	39	94%	51
Failing to put a dog on a lead in a public open space, when instructed to do so by a council officer	92%	98	100	14	91%	47	89%	40	90%	41	92%	49
Not allowing dogs within children's play areas or multi use games areas	94%	98	100	14					93%	42	94%	51
All sports pitches, but only when in use for officiated sporting matters	91%	87	100	14	87%	46	91%	42	93%	42	94%	51

Table 4 continued – order 2 & 3	Peckleton		SHEEPY		NEWBOLD VERDON		MARKFIELD		MARKFIELD ON SITE	
Responses are on line unless other wise indicated	Supportive	Total number of responses	Supportive	Total number of responses	Supportive	Total number of responses	Supportive	Total number of responses	Supportive	Total number of responses
To prohibit the lighting of fires and barbecues and camping in a park or open space managed by XXX without the consent of the Parish council.	87%	38	83%	36			90%	70	100	103
To restrict use of remote controlled model vehicles, aircrafts and motorcycling that are causing a nuisance in a park or open space managed by XXX	84%	38	80%	35	80%	37	86%	70	98%	102
Failing to leave a park managed by XXX at the closing time or when required to do so, by a council officer or a police officer	95%	39	89%	36			93%	69	100	102
Failing to put a dog on a lead in a public open space, when instructed to do so by a council officer	90%	40	86%	37			86%	72	94%	101
Not allowing dogs within children's play areas or multi use games areas	92%	40	86%	37			97%	72	96%	103
All sports pitches, but only when in use for officiated sporting matters	92%	40	86%	37			90%	71	99%	103

Table 5: Order 2 To require that dogs are kept on leads in the following areas:	Supportive	Total number of responses
Holy Rood Church, Bagworth	93%	84
St Peters Church, Thornton	93%	83
Playing Field, Fox's Covert, Fenny Drayton	74%	46
Playing Field, Ormes Lane, Ratcliffe Culey	76%	46
Markfield Community Park, Mayflower Close	60%	70

Table 6 Order 3: Miscellaneous green space controls	Supportive	Total number of responses
To prohibit riding horses or the use of horse traps (carriages) in a park or open space managed by Bagworth & Thornton without the consent of the Parish council	87%	88
To prohibit dogs from the Memorial Playing Field, Church Road, Witherley (Not excluding dogs used for medical reasons)	78%	45
To prohibit the playing or practicing of golf in a park or open space managed by Peckleton without the consent of the council.	82%	38
To prohibit horses from using a park or open space managed by Peckleton without the consent of the Parish.	79%	39
To prohibit parking of any type of vehicle on the green space on Mallory Close	91%	43

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Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

A Borough to be proud of

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND DECISION MAKING

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

19 DECEMBER 2019

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS

LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICTS COUNCIL TAX PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Report of Director of Corporate Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update and overview of Council Tax collection performance for 2018/19 carried out for all Leicestershire districts. This addresses the challenges that have been raised by Leicestershire County Council and demonstrates the excellent performance of the districts.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Scrutiny Commission note the analysis of performance on Council Tax collection rates and the initiatives taken to secure collection.
- 2.2 That Scrutiny Commission note and consider the various forms of discretion for those individual and families who find themselves in challenging circumstances.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 3.1 In June 2017 Leicestershire County Council (LCC) raised concerns that the level of council tax collected by districts was lower than they would expect for the area and that forecasting needed to improve.
- 3.2 As a result of these concerns work has been undertaken in 2018/19 to review performance and forecasting. The outcomes of this work is included in the document attached as an appendix to this report entitled Leicestershire District Councils - Council Tax Performance Review 2018/19

4. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Council Tax collection performance remains high across all districts in Leicestershire with HBBC having the second highest rate.
- 4.2 The level of recovery from all Leicestershire Districts is 99.21% when year-end collection is included in recovery.

4.3 All districts have reviewed discounts and premiums and introduced changes or are in the process of making changes that should lead to an increase of collection from empty properties.

4.4. The ranges of discretions offered to support more vulnerable people and families are considered appropriate and do not appear to be significantly reducing or impacting on the collection of council tax overall, but moreover there is an impact on timing of collections.

5. EXEMPTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES

5.1 To be taken in open session.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (AW)

6.1 Included in the report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None as a result of this report.

8. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

8.1 This links to the Council's aims for securing Value for Money and supporting its communities contained within the adopted Corporate Plan 2017.

9. CONSULTATION

8.1 Consultation has taken place between all of the Districts in Leicestershire in the compilation of this report.

10. RISK IMPLICATIONS

10.1 It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

10.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

10.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Failure to secure effective performance in the collection of council tax impacting on revenues to support delivery of essential services	Continuous review of performance and effective forecasting	Ashley Wilson

11. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The report identifies the discretionary categories with the aim of helping meeting the needs of more vulnerable individuals and families within the borough.

12. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

12.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset Management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human Resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data Protection implications
- Voluntary Sector

Background papers: Attached as an appendix to this report.

Contact Officer: Ashley Wilson, Head of Finance ext. 5609

Executive Member: Cllr Keith Lynch

Leicestershire District Councils

Council Tax Performance Review 2018/19

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an updated analysis of collection performance for 2018/19
- 1.2 To address the issues raised by Leicestershire County Council (LCC) in relation to Council Tax collection levels, which this reports now demonstrates were unfounded when after year end collection is taken into account..

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That members should note the content of the report and consider if there are any areas that they want further information on.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. In June 2017, Leicestershire County Council (LCC) raised concerns that the level of council tax collected was lower than they would expect for the area and that forecasting needed to be improved. LCC argued that weaknesses in forecasting were leading to a shortfall of £3.2m. There concerns over the level of collection at by the Leicestershire district councils, was that it fell below the national average of the upper quartile in-year collection rate of 98.85%. If this were achieved LCC were of the view it would add an extra £3.1m to the area.
- 3.2. The district council's have noted these concerns, although they felt that the concerns of LCC were not fully thought through, as a lower forecast than actual does not reduce income actually collected, and there was no consideration of council tax collected after the financial year end as in-year collection was the only factor considered.
- 3.3. The districts have taken steps in improve forecasting, sharing each others practice in order to make a better prediction. This led to improvements for the 2018/19 forecast, which LCC have confirmed they have benefited from and appreciated the efforts and actions taken.
- 3.4. The Leicestershire district councils have also considered the issues raised by LCC in terms of in-year collection performance. The performance reviewed by LCC related to the 2015/16 year and is provided in table 1 below, with Leicester City included in addition for completeness of area performance.

Table 1	Amount Collectable in year £000	Amount Collected by 31 March £000	2015/16 % collected	Amount that LCC felt could be collected @98.85%	Assumed lost in LCC's report £000
Harborough	50,474	49,677	98.4%	49,894	-217
North West Leicestershire	47,887	46,658	97.4%	47,336	-678
Hinckley and Bosworth	54,180	52,952	97.7%	53,557	-605
Charnwood	80,176	78,320	97.7%	79,254	-934
Melton	27,650	27,162	98.2%	27,332	-170
Blaby	48,377	47,385	97.9%	47,821	-436
Oadby and Wigston	25,893	25,462	98.3%	25,595	-133
District Total					-3,173
Leicester City	107,505	102,126	95.0%	106,269	-4,143

Note: Rutland County Council were collecting above 98.85% in 2015/16, so not in table above

Collection performance

- 3.5. The national average for the collection of in year council tax for districts was 98.0% for 2017/18 and 97.9% for 2018/19, and 97.1% and 97.0% for all billing authorities in England. Both statistics showing a small fall in the level of in-year collection.
- 3.6. Table 2 below is the most up to date nationally available data in terms of overall in-year collection for shire districts over the last five years. There were 201 shire districts for each year, and the rank shows the Leicestershire districts position in terms of collection performance. Just over half of the Leicestershire districts show the same small fall in collection rates noted in the national performance. However, shire districts still outperform all other types of billing authority in terms of the level of collection in year (See Table 3).

Table 2	2014/ 15		2015/ 16		2016/ 17		2017/ 18		2018/ 19	Ran k
Harborough	98.62 %	↓	98.42 %	↑	98.53 %	↑	98.60 %	←	98.60 %	41
Hinckley and Bosworth	97.99 %	↓	97.73 %	↑	98.09 %	↑	98.10 %	↑	98.11 %	92
North West Leicestershire	97.78 %	↓	97.43 %	↑	97.73 %	↑	97.78 %	↑	97.84 %	115
Melton	97.80 %	↑	98.24 %	↓	98.17 %	↓	98.12 %	↓	98.01 %	103
Blaby	97.87 %	↑	97.95 %	↑	97.95 %	↑	98.18 %	↓	97.96 %	107
Oadby and Wigston	98.36 %	↓	98.34 %	↓	98.28 %	↓	98.24 %	↓	97.89 %	113
Charnwood	97.65 %	↑	97.69 %	↑	97.79 %	↓	97.74 %	↓	97.52 %	142
	2014/ 15		2015/ 16		2016/ 17		2017/ 18		2018/ 19	
Best (2018/19) Chiltern	99.33 %	↑	99.34 %	↑	99.42 %	↓	99.35 %	↑	99.38 %	1
2nd Best (2018/19) South Cambridgeshire	99.25 %	↑	99.44 %	↓	99.40 %	↓	99.34 %	↑	99.37 %	2
Preston	94.59 %	↓	94.13 %	↑	94.22 %	↓	93.89 %	↓	93.59 %	201
Shire District Average	97.93 %	↑	98.01 %	↑	98.06 %	↓	97.99 %	↓	97.92 %	
	2014/ 15		2015/ 16		2016/ 17		2017/ 18		2018/ 19	
Leicester	94.93 %	↑	95.00 %	↑	95.22 %	↑	95.27 %	↓	94.91 %	
Rutland	99.22 %	↓	98.98 %	↓	98.92 %	↑	98.93 %	↓	98.81 %	

Key

↑ Increase ↓ Decrease ← Maintained

Table 3	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Shire District	97.90%	98.00%	98.01%	98.00%	97.90%
Outer London	96.80%	96.80%	97.00%	97.10%	97.00%
Unitary Authority	96.80%	96.90%	97.00%	96.90%	96.80%
Inner London	95.70%	95.80%	96.00%	95.90%	96.00%
Metropolitan	95.30%	95.40%	95.40%	95.40%	95.30%

- 3.7. Table 1 is based on in-year collection, so does not include any cash collected in 2018/19 that relates to the previous year. This information is now available for the 2017/18 year nationally. Table 4 below gives the collection performance for 2017/18 including the after year-end collection of 2017/18 arrears in 2018/19, compared to the in-year collection performance. The results show that all districts have a high level of overall collection, with six out of the seven Leicestershire districts collecting over 99% of the debit figure, and all above the 98.85% noted in the LCC report. In addition, councils may continue to collect arrears for 2017/18 in later periods. For example, there were £689,000 of arrears for 2016/17 or earlier years collected 2018/19. Therefore the cost of improving in year collection, does not necessary increase overall collection when considering after year-end receipts of council tax that relate to previous years. A better understanding of how this can be budgeted for by LCC may help their decision making.

Table 4	Debit 2017/18 £000	Collected in year £000	% collected in year	2017-18 collected 2018-19 £000	% including after y/e
Harborough	56,195	55,409	98.60	530	99.54
Oadby and Wigston	28,258	27,761	98.24	333	99.42
Hinckley and Bosworth	60,580	59,429	98.10	697	99.25
Blaby	54,343	53,356	98.18	570	99.23
Charnwood	89,556	87,536	97.74	1,229	99.12
North West Leicestershire	53,930	52,733	97.78	695	99.07
Melton	30,188	29,621	98.12	222	98.86
Total	373,050	365,845	98.07	4,276	99.21
South Cambridgeshire	107,623	106,912	99.34	678	99.97
Chiltern	75,168	74,679	99.35	434	99.93
Leicester City	120,969	115,255	95.28	2,736	97.54
Rutland	27,631	27,335	98.93	160	99.51

4. PROGRESS SUMMARY TO DATE

- 4.1. The LCC report prompted a review of practices and the sharing of information across the district council in Leicestershire to consider any potential issues that indicated an area needed to be addressed to improve performance.
- 4.2. Following discussions at the Leicestershire Treasurer Association, including input from LCC and Leicestershire City, and from practitioners the following were key areas to consider reviewing:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To contact high performing councils based on in-year collection • Increased use of direct debits to increase in year collection, • The level of LCTS • The use of discretion on debt collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication in terms of reminder/ nudge • Registration of liability orders, and • Enforcement action • Other benchmarking, and • Review of discounts and premiums
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4.3. The main finding from this progress report are that:

- When after year-end receipts of council tax are taken into account, the level of collection performance indicates that council tax not collected in-year is lost, but is mainly delayed until the following financial year. When after year-end collection is included in the recovery performance, the combined recovery from all the Leicestershire district councils is 99.21%.
- Based on information from the two highest performing district council for in-year collection, the evidence is not conclusive that increased direct debit (DD) collection leads to higher levels of in-year performance.
- From the national statistic release by MHCLG there is also the suggestion that a move to 12 monthly DD may move some recovery processes into the next financial year.
- To move towards giving less discretion in terms of recovery processes would need political support to take forward. This would also affect the areas of recovery and enforcement.
- All districts have reviewed their discounts and premiums, and have introduced changes or in the process of making changes that should lead to increase collection from empty properties.

Contact with high in-year collecting authorities

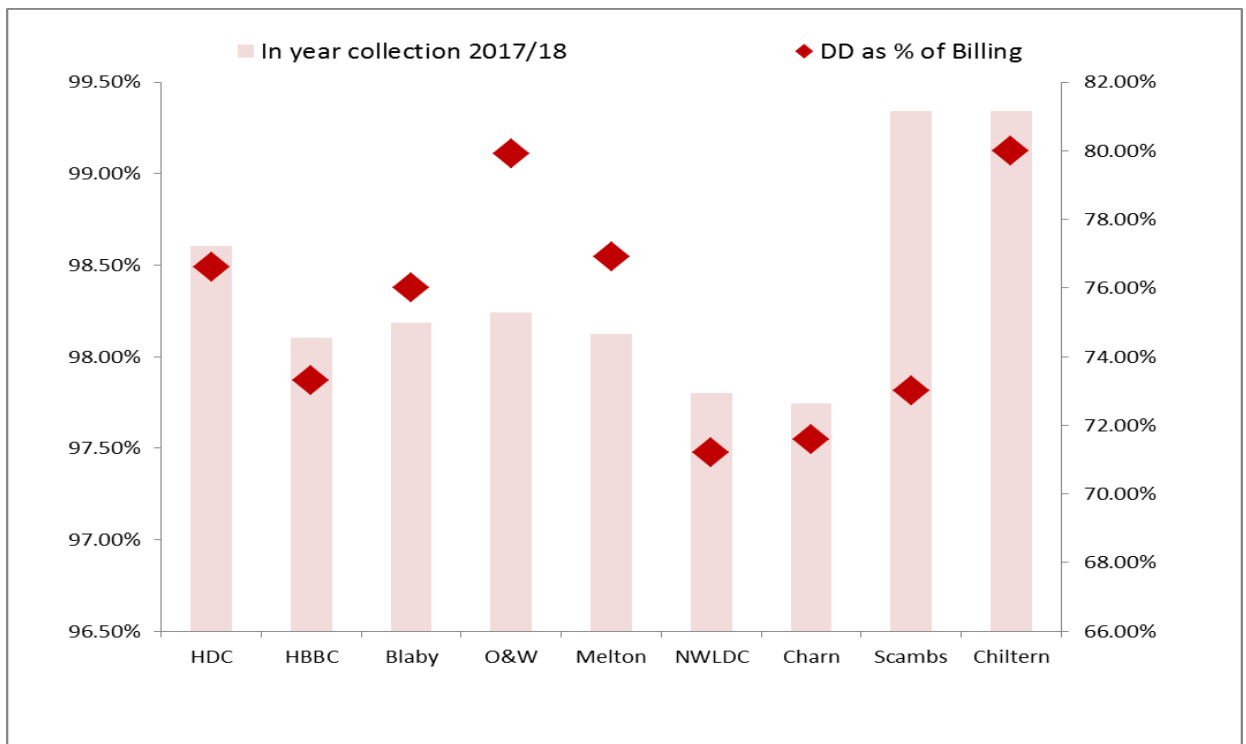
- 4.4. The two district councils with the highest level of in-year collection are Chiltern and South Cambridgeshire. What can be noted is that they are both relatively affluent areas with a low level of deprivation as noted on the 2015 deprivation scores in the table below. This does infer that there is a relationship between in-year collection and deprivation, but that the link is not absolute, with wide variations nationally

Table 5;Local Authority District name	IMD - Average score	Position out of 326 (1= least deprived, 326 = most deprived)	In year collection performance 2018/19
Chiltern	4904.37	3	99.35%
South Cambridgeshire	6317.89	13	99.34%
Harborough	6492.1	16	98.60%
Blaby	8729.67	39	98.18%
Oadby and Wigston	10763.5	78	98.24%
Hinckley and Bosworth	10810.17	79	98.10%
Charnwood	11208.3	90	97.74%
Melton	11229.74	91	98.12%
North West Leicestershire	12491.94	113	97.78%
Leicester City	23770.26	306	94.91%
Rutland	7957,12	26	98.81%

- 4.5. These two councils were contacted to discuss council tax performance. There responses are covered in the report below.

Direct Debit payments and LCTS

- 4.6. There is no nationally available information on the level of DD usage that link to collection performance. The MHCLG statistical release paper 2017-18, did note, “that since April 2013 council payers ... have been permitted to spread the payment of their rates over 12 months as opposed to 10 months as in the past. This means authorities are unlikely to commence any recovery action to collect the arrears until the following year.” This would have an impact on in-year collection irrespective of the type of payment used. The statistical release did not quantify the impact.
- 4.7. Similarly, it was noted that the level of LCTS may affect collection levels, but this was not quantified. The institute of Fiscal Studies did publish a report on “The impacts of localised council tax support schemes.” This noted that, “Reducing a household’s CTS entitlement significantly increases the probability that it reports being in arrears on its council tax.”
- 4.8. The national report on collection rate statistics also noted that for the 5-year period to 2018/19 that the Council Tax Referendum Principles have had changes that will affect the net collectable debit. In 2018-19, where authorities with responsibility for adult social care were allowed to set a council tax increase of up to 6% without holding a referendum. This impact was not quantified in the report, but was the decision made by Leicestershire County Council.
- 4.9. In our discussions with South Cambridgeshire (SCambs) they had a DD rate of 73% and an in year collection rate of 99.34%. Five of the seven Leicestershire district councils have a DD percentage higher than that. SCambs did not feel the level of DD was a key part of improving performance as they had a range of payment options that met the needs of payers. They did note that they do not normally allow DDs to be phased so recovery will go beyond the financial year-end if a payer goes into arrears.
- 4.10. Chiltern had a DD level of 80% and encouraged its use at every point of contact. Therefore, these are opposing views on DD usefulness. Chiltern are now in partnership with South Bucks, who are moving to having an emphasis on DD. South Buck had an in year collection rate of 97.75% for 2018/19, so it is to early to identify if the change will make a difference. The graph below indicates the link is not clear between the level of DD and in year collection for those sampled.



Conclusion

- 4.11. It is unclear if a higher level of DD take up will lead to improved overall collection based on the findings above, and DD based on a 12-month collection profile may mean that some recovery will take place after the year-end.
- 4.12. There is some evidence that the less LCTS is offered the lower the level of council tax collection will be, but it has not been possible to quantify this in terms of the amount or the level of delay.

Discretion on debt collection

- 4.13. The removal of current discretion levels to enforce a higher collection rate in-year would need to move towards a strict enforcement of the legislation. This would need political support. Taking into account the level of collection including arrears after the financial year-end, which is in most cases 99% or more, the impact of this on vulnerable groups would need to be balanced against the increase in collection. A firmer stance on in-year collection may seem to be at odds with this.
- 4.14. Both Chiltern and SCambs had an agreed approach for vulnerable people, but this is based on a higher level of reminders and working with individuals' in-year.
- 4.15. Care needs to be taken when removing discretion as it can make the situation worse, as noted by the Citizen's advice Bureau:
- When people miss a single council tax payment, a pure regulations approach would mean they liable for the full year's outstanding tax, meaning a missed payment of £167 can increase to a debt of £1671 within 2 weeks of receiving notice.
 - Councils that have to use a court order and bailiffs and adds significant additional costs (an average of £84 for a court order and £310 for bailiff fees) onto people's debts.

This can actually make the payers difficulties worse and lead to a history of being behind in council tax and being late with payments. Therefore, the right approach to the use of discretion is important.

4.16. The following are examples of how discretion has been used, that have involved agreeing to a manageable payment profile, that in some instances meant not all the arrears were collected by the financial year-end:

- Domestic abuse victim being given additional time to pay council tax as partner had to leave house and was the main earner.
- Family with eleven children given extra time to pay of council tax arrears due to financial pressures that could have led to homelessness without support
- Additional time given to vulnerable payers that need an advocate to help them manage their finances due to mental or physical difficulties.
- Allowing time following referral to Citizens Advice Bureau to obtain guidance on multiple financial issues.
- Working with an individual who had reading and writing difficulties to understand why he had been summoned, and helping t deal with his health issues. This included a referral to a Residents Support Team and working with his GP on health issues.

Conclusion

4.17. The current level of discretion does not appear to be significantly reducing the collection of council tax overall, but is limited to affecting the timing of the collection.

Discounts and premiums

4.18. As well as the councils wishing to reduce the number of long-term empty properties, Leicestershire County Council asked all Districts to assess what it can do to increase council tax income by harmonising the discounts and premiums being applied. This may not lead to increased income in practice, as hopefully it will have the affect of bring the properties back into use, and owners avoiding the premium charge as the property is no longer empty. The table below gives the actions taken in response to LCC's request.

Table 7 Before	Unoccupied and unfurnished				
	1-5 months	6 months +	2 years +	Uninhabitable	Second Homes
Blaby	1 month free	Full Charge	No premium	50% discount	10% discount
Charnwood	Full Charge	Full Charge	50% premium	50% discount	Full Charge
Harborough	1 month free	Full Charge	50% premium	Full Charge	Full Charge
Hinckley	1 month free	Full Charge	No premium	50% discount	Full Charge
North West Leics	1 month free	Full Charge	No premium	50% discount	10% discount
Melton	1 month free	Full Charge	50% premium	50% discount	Full Charge
Oadby & Wigston	28 days free	Full Charge	50% premium	50% discount	Full Charge

After	Unoccupied and unfurnished				
	1-5 months	6 months +	2 years +	Uninhabitable	Second Homes
Blaby (From 1 April 2019)	1 month free	Full Charge	100% premium	50% discount	Full Charge
Charnwood (From 1 April 2019)	Full Charge	Full Charge	50% premium	50% for 6 months	Full Charge
Harborough (From 1 April 2019)	1 month free	Full Charge	50% premium	Full Charge	Full Charge
Hinckley (From 1 April 2020 members)	1 month free	Full Charge	100% premium	50% discount	Full Charge
North West Leics (From 1 April 2019)	1 month free	Full Charge	50% premium then 100% yr3	50% discount	Full Charge
Melton (From 1 April 2019)	Full Charge	Full Charge	100% premium	50% discount (up to 12 mnths)	Full Charge
Oadby & Wigston (From 1 April 2019)	Full Charge	Full Charge	100% premium	Full Charge	Full Charge

Changes are highlighted in Yellow



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

A Borough to be proud of

Scrutiny Commission Work Programme 2019-2021

DECEMBER 2019

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Date	Issue	Reason	Outcomes	Lead Officer	Supports corporate aims
6 February 2020 (budget meeting)	Budget reports			Ashley Wilson	All
	Pay policy statement			Julie Stay	3
12 March 2020	S106 contributions	Annual report		Nicola Smith	2, 3
	Planning appeals	Six monthly report			
	Unitary authority proposals			Bill Cullen	All
	Crematorium	Progress update	Scrutinise progress	Julie Kenny	All
30 April 2020	Parish & Community Initiative Fund	Annual report		Caroline Roffey	
	Arterial routes	Review work currently being undertaken	Scrutinise work and processes	Bill Cullen	All
18 June 2020	Environmental Improvement Programme	Annual report			
	Equalities monitoring	Annual report		Julie Stay	
	Ivanhoe Line	Lack of involvement at this point	Awareness of work of neighbouring authority		2, 3
	Rural Strategy			Edwina Grant	2
	Economic Regeneration Strategy	Annual report			
	Heritage Strategy	Annual report			
13 August 2020	VCS commissioning outcomes	Annual report		Edwina Grant	All
	Recycling	Scrutinise performance and policy	Ensure we are doing as much as we can	Caroline Roffey	2
	Affordable housing	Annual review of delivery	Monitor provision		All
8 October 2020	Community Safety Partnership	Six monthly update			
	Technical & community training and education				

Date	Issue	Reason	Outcomes	Lead Officer	Supports corporate aims
23 November 2020					

To programme
Governance review

Key to corporate aims

- 1 – People
- 2 – Places
- 3 – Prosperity

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HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

FINANCE & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY

14 OCTOBER 2019 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr C Ladkin - Chairman
Mr P Williams – Vice-Chairman
Mr JMT Collett, Mr SM Gibbens, Mr K Morrell, Mrs LJ Mullaney, Mr MC Sheppard-Bools
and Mr R Webber-Jones

Officers in attendance: Tan Ashraf, Ilyas Bham, Matthew Bowers, Stephen Meynell,
Rebecca Owen, Ian Pinfold, Kirstie Rea and Nicola Smith

180 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

It was noted that Councillor Webber-Jones would be arriving late.

181 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was moved by Councillor P Williams, seconded by Councillor Gibbens and

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 19 August 2019 be confirmed
and signed by the chairman.

182 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

183 FRONTLINE SERVICE REVIEW: STREET SCENE SERVICES

The report on the performance of streetscene services was presented to members and it was highlighted that the dry recycling rates were the best in Leicestershire. In relation to the 86% increase in the number of residents using the large item collection service a member asked if there was improved efficiency within this excellent service and officers said there was a net increase in income and additional demand.

It was reported that two officers investigate fly tipping incidents after a member expressed satisfaction on the response locally to fly tipping incidents and asked if any investigations were undertaken.

Members discussed the reduced recycling rates which officers explained was a national trend and due in part to the use of lighter materials.

Councillor Webber-Jones entered the meeting at 6.51pm.

Members thanked officers for the report and it was noted.

184 FRONTLINE SERVICE REVIEW: PLANNING

Members received a report on the performance of the planning service and it was reported that the partnership with Blaby, Harborough, Melton and Oadby and Wigston was working very well.

It was noted that the number of planning applications had increased however the income level was lower as the applications were smaller.

Members expressed their concern on addressing the five year housing land supply as well as the Housing Delivery Test and the Sustainable Urban Extensions at Barwell and Earl Shilton.

Officers explained that the Housing Delivery Test could affect Neighbourhood Development Plans.

In response to members' questions officers explained that the Council was prevented by statute in becoming involved in Neighbourhood Development Plans, however the Rural Community Council worked with parishes and provided support. It was noted that the Local Plan took Neighbourhood Plans into account but national policy could supersede.

Members noted the report and thanked officers for presenting the report and providing comprehensive explanations.

Councillor Collett left the meeting at 7.44pm.

185 FINANCIAL OUTTURN AUGUST 2019

The financial outturn position report to August 2019 was presented. Members were updated on the movement in reserves of £155,000 due to a decrease in the number of large planning applications.

Members expressed concern on the reduction in the number of planning applications becoming a trend and officers reported that they were assessing the impact as part of the budget setting process.

Members noted the report and thanked officers.

186 SUNDRY DEBTS - Q2 2019/2020

Members were updated on the position on sundry debts as of 30th September 2019.

Members were informed that the Council was the only district council in Leicestershire to set a debt recovery target that was reported to members. The target ensured that debt over 90 days old remained below 25%. The September position was 22.12%, an increase from the 18.8% reported for the first quarter.

It was also noted that the external audit of the Council's Statement of Accounts had started on 16 October 2019 and that Audit Committee would receive an update at the next meeting.

In response to a member's query about the election debt on page 51 officers responded that it was likely to be the bill for parish elections.

The report was noted and members thanked officers.

(The Meeting closed at 8.10 pm)

CHAIRMAN