

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

25 FEBRUARY 2020 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: MRS L HODGKINS - MAYOR
MR E HOLICK – DEPUTY MAYOR

Mrs CM Allen, Mr RG Allen, Mr DC Bill MBE, Mr SL Bray,
Mr MB Cartwright, Mr JMT Collett, Mrs MA Cook, Mr DS Cope,
Mrs MJ Crooks, Mr WJ Crooks, Mr DJ Findlay, Mr REH Flemming,
Mr A Furlong, Mr SM Gibbens, Mrs DT Glenville, Mr C Ladkin,
Mr KWP Lynch, Mr K Morrell, Mrs LJ Mullaney, Mr MT Mullaney,
Mr K Nichols, Ms A Pendlebury, Mr RB Roberts, Mrs H Smith,
Mr BR Walker, Mr R Webber-Jones, Mr HG Williams and Mr P Williams

Officers in attendance: Ilyas Bham, Matthew Bowers, Bill Cullen, Julie Kenny, Rebecca Owen, Sharon Stacey and Ashley Wilson

315 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Boothby, Lay, O'Shea and Sheppard-Bools.

316 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

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

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

317 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

318 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reported on recent visits, the Active Soles initiative and the implementation of discounted rail travel for veterans.

Councillor HG Williams arrived at 6.36pm.

319 QUESTIONS

Question received from Councillor Webber-Jones to the Executive member for Planning:

"I would like to ask the Executive Lead for Planning to explain the position following the publication of LCC's Cabinet report in December and the further Cabinet update in February concerning Barwell SUE and the S106 Agreement. Can he respond to the issues raised in the report which implies that the county council has not been engaged in the s106 agreement since 2013, and also confirm what steps have HBBC taken to secure a resolution to the planning application and section 106 agreement?"

Response from Councillor Bill:

"I would like to thank Councillor Webber-Jones for drawing attention to this most important matter.

The Barwell SUE has been in the adopted Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan since 2009 and has been an essential part of the need to deliver new homes to meet the growing needs of this community in line with the requirement to demonstrate that we have a five year supply of building land. The scale of the proposed development makes delivery a complicated matter because of the wide range of landowners involved, as well as a wide range of organisations including the developers and the county council. The developers behind the scheme have taken a long time to finalise the legal documentation associated with the resolution to grant planning permission but throughout this time the borough council and county council have been working with the developers to finalise these details. We have engaged Homes England, the government's national advisor on the delivery of homes, to bring any assistance it could to move this forward. We were informed by the developers in November that they had finalised the paperwork and the section 106 agreement could now be signed.

I must highlight that since the resolution to grant planning permission, the county council has been fully engaged in both the section 106 agreement and the planning permission. It came as a real surprise therefore to see the report that went to the county council's Cabinet in December. A reader of that Cabinet report may be under the impression that the county council had not been involved in the section 106 for a number of years. I can reassure the Council that the county council has been working on the document up until 2019. To emphasise the point, the county council prepared some further changes to the document at the start of last year and continued to work with our officers on the planning permission details since then. There has been a series of meetings throughout last year where the Barwell SUE was under consideration by both the county council and Homes England as a priority site for attention. It is rather concerning that the county council did not realise when they drafted the latest document early last year that the two schemes for which they were seeking funding could not be delivered. Even more worrying was the suggestion from the county council that more investigations on highways were needed and that this could take 12 months.

I am also extremely concerned to read that the potential highway mitigation that the county council had identified was necessary can no longer be delivered. Having been closely involved with seeking improvements to Hinckley's northern perimeter, in other words the A47, throughout this time I can report that it has always been my understanding that the proposed developments would fund the improvements needed to ensure the safe and efficient operation of this route in and out of the area.

We must now find a way forward and I can inform the Council that our officers recently convened an urgent meeting with the developers and the county council's highways and education teams. They have put forward a pragmatic approach to enable the county council to reconsider the highway impacts, although it is likely that this will still take up to six months to finalise. We have also asked the county council to update all of their section 106 requirements to ensure that we are maximising the mitigation of this development on local infrastructure."

By way of supplementary question, Councillor Webber-Jones asked if that meant that no further highway improvements would take place. In response, Councillor Bill hoped that this was not the case and raised the point that six years ago as consultee on the SUE, the highways authority said the A47 required widening so that surely would not have changed now.

320 LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S POSITION STATEMENT

In his position statement, the Leader referred to several current issues including the new strategic alliances within Leicestershire, the free parking initiative, the sustainable urban extensions, the five year housing land supply which would be subject of a report at the

next Scrutiny Commission and the development of a new global centre of excellence and research at Triumph. Tribute was also paid to former councillor Peter Hall who had passed away recently.

321 MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

The minutes of the joint meeting of the Scrutiny Commission and Finance & Performance Scrutiny on 6 February were received for information.

322 BUDGET REPORTS

Consideration was given to the general fund budget, the calculation of council tax, the housing revenue account, the capital programme, the capital strategy, fees and charges and treasury management & prudential indicators. It was noted that the Medium Term Financial Strategy would be presented when sufficient information was available from the government. Service managers and the finance team were thanked for their hard work in preparing the budget.

323 GENERAL FUND BUDGET

It was noted that, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, voting on this item would be recorded.

It was moved by Councillor Lynch and seconded by Councillor Bray that the recommendations within the report be approved.

The vote was taken as follows:

Councillors Bill, Bray, Cartwright, Cope, MJ Crooks, WJ Crooks, Findlay, Flemming, Gibbens, Glenville, Hodgkins, Hollick, Lynch, LJ Mullaney, MT Mullaney, Nichols, Pendlebury, Walker, Webber-Jones and P Williams voted FOR the motion (20);

Councillors CM Allen, RG Allen, Collett, Cook, Ladkin, Morrell, Roberts, Smith and HG Williams voted AGAINST the motion (9);

Councillor Furlong abstained from voting.

The motion was declared CARRIED and it was therefore

RESOLVED –

- (i) The general fund budget for 2019/20 and 2020/21 be approved;
- (ii) The special expenses area budget for 2019/20 and 2020/21 be approved;
- (iii) The proposed movement in general fund reserves and balances for 2019/20 and 2020/20 be approved.

324 CALCULATION OF COUNCIL TAX FOR 2020/21

It was noted that, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, voting on this item would be recorded.

It was moved by Councillor Lynch and seconded by Councillor Bray that the recommendations within the report be approved.

The vote was taken as follows:

Councillors Bill, Bray, Cartwright, Cope, MJ Crooks, WJ Crooks, Findlay, Flemming, Gibbens, Glenville, Hodgkins, Hollick, Lynch, LJ Mullaney, MT Mullaney, Nichols, Pendlebury, Walker, Webber-Jones and P Williams voted FOR the motion (20);

Councillors CM Allen, RG Allen, Collett, Cook, Ladkin, Morrell, Roberts, Smith and HG Williams voted AGAINST the motion (9);

Councillor Furlong abstained from voting.

The motion was declared CARRIED and it was therefore

RESOLVED – the following be approved in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act (1992) (the Act) for 2020/21:

- (i) £47,479,928 being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in section 31A(2) of the Act (gross expenditure on general fund services, special district expenses and parish precepts);
- (ii) £40,040,945 being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in 31A(3) of the Act (gross income including external financing and the use of reserves);
- (iii) £7,438,983 being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above calculated by the council, in accordance with section 31A(4) of the Act as its council tax requirement for the year (amount to be funded from council tax, including special expenses and parish precepts);
- (iv) £134.87 being the amount calculated by the council, in accordance with section 31(B) of the Act as the basic amount of its council tax for the year (average local council tax, not including parish precepts);
- (v) A band D council tax for borough wide services, excluding special expenses and parish precepts, of £115.50;
- (vi) An average band D council tax relating to borough wide services and an average of special expenses and parish council services of £190.77;
- (vii) Appendix B to the report, being the council tax for the Hinckley & Bosworth Borough divided by the tax base, including amounts for the Leicestershire County Council, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire, and the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority and for each area and valuation (council tax band charges for each parish and special expense area);
- (viii) A forecast transfer of £4,467 council tax surplus from the collection fund to the general fund.

325 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

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

RESOLVED –

- (i) The rent policy for 2020/21 be approved;
- (ii) The revised housing revenue and housing repairs account budgets for 2019/20 be approved;
- (iii) The housing revenue and housing repairs account budgets for 2020/21 be approved;
- (iv) The proposed movement in reserves be approved.

326 CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND CAPITAL STRATEGY

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

RESOLVED –

- (i) The capital strategy be approved;
- (ii) The proposed capital programme for 2019/2020 – 2022/23 be approved;
- (iii) The growth bids and savings be approved.

327 FEES AND CHARGES

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

RESOLVED – the fees and charges for 2020/21 be approved.

328 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

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

RESOLVED –

- (i) The prudential indicators and limits for 2019/20 to 2022/23 be approved;
- (ii) The minimum revenue position statement be approved;
- (iii) The treasury management strategy be approved.

329 REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

Consideration was given to the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on members' allowances. Members expressed their thanks to members of the panel for their thorough work.

Councillor Bray, seconded by Councillor RG Allen, proposed that the recommendations be approved with an amendment to the list of approved duties to merge paragraphs

(viii) and (ix) and to read “attendance by Executive members at meetings and events within the borough that directly relate to their lead member role on the invitation of an officer of the council or with prior consultation with the Democratic Services Manager or Monitoring Officer”.

Upon being put to the vote, the motion as amended was declared CARRIED and it was

RESOLVED –

- (i) The current level of allowances be maintained, with annual increases in line with officer pay awards as agreed previously;
- (ii) The ICT policy be reviewed in relation to use of members’ own IT equipment;
- (iii) The revised approved duties as amended above be approved;
- (iv) The panel be supported in its review of special responsibility allowances;
- (v) Consideration be given to reviewing the committee structure in relation to Audit Committee and Ethical Governance & Personnel Committee.

330 MOTIONS RECEIVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 17

Councillor Pendlebury, seconded by Councillor LJ Mullaney, proposed the following motion:

“This Council proposes a ban on the use and release of sky lanterns and helium balloons meant for release on all borough council owned public open space. We call upon our partners in parish councils, Leicestershire County Council and indeed the government to follow our lead. We also propose that this council promotes information to local people, leading to better understanding of the damage they cause.

Sky lanterns and helium balloons are easily available and sold in their thousands each year to mark important events and, while they look pretty for a few moments, many people are completely unaware of the dangers they pose to wildlife, livestock, pets and buildings. There are many different varieties of lantern, but even the biodegradable bamboo lanterns will take a decade to decompose and will continue to pose a threat to animals throughout that time. This is also true of helium balloons which are generally made of latex but can take months to degrade and pose a similar risk of entrapment.

The RSPCA report that “when ingested, sharp parts like the wire frame can tear and puncture an animal’s throat or stomach causing internal bleeding. Animals can also become entangled in fallen lantern frames, where they can suffer from injury and stress trying to get free or starve to death from being trapped.”

Sky lanterns and helium balloons can travel miles, with the lanterns taking a naked flame into unknown areas which can lead to thatched roofs and other buildings facing the threat of fire damage.

As you may have seen reported, at 12:38am on 1 January 2020 a zoo in Germany caught fire and 30 animals were lost in a blaze that saw the ape house destroyed with five orangutans, two gorillas and several monkeys dying an agonising death, thought to have been caused by debris from the lanterns which were found in the remains. Locally, only 26 miles from Hinckley, what was reported at the time as the “largest fire ever in the

west midlands” was caused by a sky lantern landing on a plastic recycling plant in Smethwick causing £6million worth of damage with images of the sky lantern that caused the damage caught on CCTV.

Organisations including the Countryside Alliance, Women’s Food & Farming Union (WFU), the Soil Association and the National Farmer’s Union (NFU) and many more are also in support of this ban.”

Upon being put to the vote, the motion was CARRIED and it was

RESOLVED – the motion be approved.

(The Meeting closed at 8.04 pm)

MAYOR