

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

22 February 2023 AT 6.30 pm

PRESENT: CLLR DT GLENVILLE - MAYOR
CLLR SM GIBBENS – DEPUTY MAYOR

Cllr CM Allen, Cllr RG Allen, Cllr DC Bill MBE, Cllr SL Bray,
Cllr MB Cartwright, Cllr MA Cook, Cllr DS Cope, Cllr MJ Crooks,
Cllr WJ Crooks, Cllr REH Flemming, Cllr A Furlong,
Cllr L Hodgkins, Cllr E Hollick, Cllr C Ladkin, Cllr KWP Lynch,
Cllr K Morrell, Cllr LJ Mullaney, Cllr MT Mullaney, Cllr K Nichols,
Cllr LJP O'Shea, Cllr A Pendlebury, Cllr RB Roberts,
Cllr MC Sheppard-Bools, Cllr H Smith, Cllr BR Walker,
Cllr R Webber-Jones, Cllr HG Williams and Cllr P Williams

Officers in attendance: Bill Cullen, Paul Grundy, Caroline Roffey, Sharon Stacey and Ashley Wilson

290. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Boothby, Collett, Findlay and Lay.

291. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

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

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2022 be approved and signed by the Mayor.

292. **Declarations of interest**

Councillor Bill declared a non-registrable interest in agenda item 16 (motions) as a member of Leicestershire County Council's Local Government Pension Scheme Committee and stated he would not take part in discussion or vote on the item.

Councillors W Crooks, Hodgkins, Lynch, Morrell, Nichols and O'Shea declared pecuniary interests in the item 16 as members of the pension fund.

293. **Mayor's Communications**

The Mayor provided an update on engagements and events.

294. **Questions**

(a) Question from Councillor R Allen to the Executive member for Finance:

“There appears to be renewed activity on the crematorium site. Can the Executive member confirm that work has recommenced and, if so, provide an indicative completion date please?”

Response from Councillor Lynch:

“As Councillor Allen is aware, the site condition surveys undertaken by the administration he was part of failed to accurately highlight the ground conditions on site.

The construction of the crematorium has been put on hold whilst further site investigation and monitoring of the ground conditions take place. As a result, we hope to understand the changing nature of the site and mitigate any ground issues with a suitable design solution.

Monitoring is due for completion at the end of March this year following which the contractor will forward their revised design proposals and costs for delivery of the project.”

By way of supplementary question, Cllr Allen asked for confirmation about whether work had commenced. In response, Councillor Lynch stated that investigations were still underway.

(b) Question from Councillor R Allen to the Executive member for Finance:

“Can the Executive member for Finance please provide me with the figure for the council’s total borrowing commitments as at 31 January 2023?”

Response from Councillor Lynch:

“I am pleased that Councillor Allen has chosen to take an interest in this matter. It’s a shame his party hasn’t taken such an interest in the national situation as latest BBC figures reveal his government’s level of debt has now reached £2.5tn. In December alone they borrowed £27.4bn - £16.7bn more than the December before.

The borrowing position is fully covered in the prudential indicator and treasury management report, with details on external debt held at paragraph 3.18 and internal financing at 3.14. The position in this report at 1 April 2023 is no different to the position as at 31 January 2023.”

295. **Leader of the Council's Position Statement**

The Leader of Council presented his position statement, mentioning items including cost of living events, community health services, the UK shared prosperity fund, asylum seekers, and the national rail freight interchange.

296. **Minutes of the Scrutiny Commission**

The minutes of the Scrutiny Commission were received.

297. **Budget reports:**

Consideration was given to the general fund budget 2023/24, the housing revenue account budget 2023/24, council tax setting, fees and charges 2023/24,

capital programme & capital strategy, and treasury management & prudential indicators. The finance team was thanked for its work on the budget.

It was moved by Councillor Lynch and seconded by Councillor Bray that the budget reports be approved.

(a) General fund budget 2023/24

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, voting on this motion was recorded.

Councillors Bill, Bray, Cartwright, Cope, J Crooks, W Crooks, Flemming, Gibbens, Glenville, Hodgkins, Hollick, Lynch, L Mullaney, M Mullaney, Nichols, Pendlebury, Sheppard-Bools, Walker, Webber-Jones and P Williams voted FOR the motion (20);

Councillors C Allen, R Allen, Cook, Ladkin, Morrell, O'Shea, Roberts, and Smith voted AGAINST the motion (8);

Councillors Furlong and H Williams abstained from voting.

The motion was therefore declared CARRIED and it was

RESOLVED –

- (i) The general fund budget for 2022/23 and 2023/24 be approved;
- (ii) The special expenses area budget for 2022/23 and 2023/24 be approved;
- (iii) The proposed one-off movement in the 2022/23 budget be approved;
- (iv) The proposed movement in general fund balances and earmarked reserves for 2022/23 and 2023/24 be approved.

(b) Calculation of council tax for 2023/24

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, voting on this amendment was recorded.

Councillors Bill, Bray, Cartwright, Cope, J Crooks, W Crooks, Flemming, Gibbens, Glenville, Hodgkins, Hollick, Lynch, L Mullaney, M Mullaney, Nichols, Pendlebury, Sheppard-Bools, Walker, Webber-Jones and P Williams voted FOR the motion (20);

Councillors C Allen, R Allen, Cook, Ladkin, Morrell, O'Shea, Roberts and Smith voted AGAINST the motion (8);

Councillors Furlong and H Williams abstained from voting.

The motion was therefore declared CARRIED and it was

RESOLVED – in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the following be approved:

- (i) £61,477,360, 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) £53,110,893, being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in section 31(A) (3) of the Act (gross income including external financing and the use of reserves);
- (iii) £8,366,467, being the amount by which the aggregate at (i) above exceeds the aggregate at (ii) 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) £149.87 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 council precepts, of £130.50;
- (vi) An average band D council tax relating to borough wide services and an average of special expenses and parish council services of £212.24;
- (vii) Appendix B to the report being the council tax for the HBBC district divided by the tax base, including amounts for the Leicestershire County Council, The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire, and Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority and for each area and valuation (council tax band charges for each parish and special expense area).

(c) Housing revenue account budget 2022/23

RESOLVED –

- (i) The rent policy for 2023/24 be approved;
- (ii) The revised housing revenue and housing repairs account budgets for 2023/23 be approved;

(iii) The housing revenue and housing repairs account budgets for 2023/24 be approved;

(iv) The proposed movement in reserves be approved.

(d) Fees & charges 2023/24

RESOLVED – the fees and charges book for 2023/24 be approved.

(e) Capital programme 2022/23 to 2025/26

RESOLVED –

(i) The capital strategy be approved;

(ii) The proposed capital programme for 2022/23 to 2025/26 be approved;

(iii) The growth bids detailed in the report be approved.

(f) Treasury management strategy and prudential indicators 2022/23 to 2025/26

RESOLVED –

(i) The prudential indicators and limits for 2022/23 to 2025/26, including the authorised limit prudential indicator, be approved;

(ii) The minimum revenue provision (MRP) statement be approved;

(iii) The treasury management strategy be approved.

298. **Pay Policy Statement**

Consideration was given to the pay policy statement for 2023/24. Members asked whether there had been an exercise to measure salaries against the private sector and enquired about the gender pay gap position. It was agreed that this information would be provided outside of the meeting.

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

RESOLVED –

(i) The pay policy statement for 2023/24 be approved;

(ii) The reduction in the pay gap between the top earner and the median average earner within the council be noted.

299. Homelessness Rough Sleeping Review & Strategy report

Council received the homelessness review and homelessness and rough sleeping strategy. Officers were thanked for their work on the strategy and their support of residents.

It was moved by Councillor M Mullaney, seconded by Councillor Bray and

RESOLVED –

- (i) The strategy and subsequent approach to the prevention of homelessness in all its forms be approved;
- (ii) The action plan and associated work streams in progress be noted.

300. Undertaking of urgent works at Bradgate Stables

Members were informed of the latest position regarding Bradgate Stables and considered actions to secure its preservation. It was moved by Councillor Bill, seconded by Councillor Cartwright and

RESOLVED –

- (i) The limited progress by the owners on undertaking the urgent works required to preserve the building be noted;
- (ii) The proposals for the long term strategy for the building be noted;
- (iii) The Director (Community & Planning Services) be granted delegated authority to:
 - a. Present the agreed urgent work schedule and specification to the building owner giving a short period of notice that the council intends to carry out the specified works should the building owner fail to take steps to undertake the urgent work voluntarily;
 - b. Serve the agreed urgent works notice if no clear commitment to the works being undertaken voluntarily be provided during the notice period, and to make any necessary amendments to the contents of the notice;
 - c. Authorise the appointment of the required professional services to complete the urgent works in default, with the appointment made upon expiry of a seven day period from the serving of the urgent works notice if no clear commitment to the works being undertaken voluntarily be provided during this period;
 - d. Make necessary provisions for gaining authorised access to the site to complete the urgent works in default should access be withheld.

- (iv) A supplementary budget of up to £300,000 for costs and £240,000 for the grant income from Historic England be approved.

301. **Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy**

Council considered adoption of the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy 2022. During discussion, concern was expressed regarding the amount of packaging used by retailers.

It was moved by Councillor W Crooks, seconded by Councillor Bill and

RESOLVED –

- (i) The Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy be adopted;
- (ii) The continuation of the Leicestershire Waste Partnership be endorsed but it be requested that it be developed and enhanced to ensure appropriate political, strategic and organisational engagement;
- (iii) The Leicestershire Waste Partnership be requested to explore collaborative opportunities which have the potential to deliver environmental improvements whilst helping to reduce costs across the waste system, such that cost shunting is avoided and mutual benefits are shared across all partners;
- (iv) Authority be delegated to the Director (Corporate & Street Scene Services) in consultation with the Executive member for Street Scene Services to make any further changes to the strategy emerging from discussions with partners.

302. **Appointments to Markfield Parish Council**

Members were apprised of the current situation at Markfield Parish Council whereby following a number of resignations from parish councillors, the parish council was inquorate. It was moved by Councillor Bill, seconded by Councillor Webber-Jones and

RESOLVED –

- (i) The appointment of Stuart Bray and Richard Allen be approved and the required Order be made;
- (ii) The scheme of delegation be amended to delegate future appointments to parish councils to the Director (Corporate & Street Scene Services).

303. **Motions received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 17**

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Furlong and seconded by Councillor Cartwright:

“This Council notes:

Monies associated with Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council’s staff pension scheme are held within the Leicestershire County Council pension fund. This externally managed fund is reported to have fossil fuel investments of £154m on 31 March 2022 or 3.7% of the fund’s total investments of £4.1bn.

The United Nations Paris Agreement, reaffirmed at the COP27 Climate Summit in Egypt, commits governments to keep the global temperature increase to under 2.0 degrees and aim for 1.5 degrees. Carbon budgets produced by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, United Nations and the International Energy Agency show that preventing two degrees of warming relies on humanity not burning most of its proven fossil fuel reserves.

Former bank of England governor, Mark Carney, has warned that fossil fuel investments risk becoming “enormous, stranded assets”¹ as fund managers reevaluate the sector. Speaking on BBC Radio 4 in 2019 he said “a question for every company, every financial institution, every asset manager, pension fund or insurer – what’s your plan?”

Pension funds have a fiduciary duty to consider the material risks of continued investment in fossil fuels. Fiduciary duty is defined by the Law Commission as “ensuring the pensions can be paid, ensuring that this is undertaken at the best possible value”.

Pension funds also have a legal duty to treat members “fairly as between them”. That means taking seriously the longer-term interests of younger members who may be affected more by the climate transition.

This Council commits to:

1. Reaffirming the principle embodied in the economy strand of the borough’s Climate Change Strategy 2022 – 2024, which seeks to ensure that Council’s investments are placed in environmental and socially responsible stewardship. Fossil fuel investments must be considered as part of the council’s “carbon footprint”.

Withdrawing our pension fund from those companies who create the largest carbon emissions is one of the most impactful steps we can take to reduce our impact on our community and the world.

2. Calculate and publish the scale of that carbon footprint at a borough-wide level associated with pension investments in the Leicestershire scheme.
3. Calling on Leicestershire County Council Pension Fund to bring forward a transparent plan to divest from fossil fuels by 2030 through the development and adoption of responsible investment policies that:

- a) Stop investment in energy companies actively exploiting new fossil fuel reserves
- b) Divest from direct ownership and any commingled funds that include fossil fuel public equities and corporate bonds unless the specific funds are being used exclusively to develop or support renewables, carbon capture, hydrogen or other decarbonisation technology
- c) Instruct its fund managers to pursue an active investment strategy in companies with a verified commitment to, and track record of, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and minimise climate risk.”

^{1[1]}<https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/21/climate-stranded-assets-show-the-need-for-rapid-energy-transition-carney-says.html>

Councillor Furlong, along with five further councillors, requested that voting on the motion be recorded. The vote was taken as follows:

Councillors Bray, Cartwright, Cope, J Crooks, Flemming, Furlong, Gibbens, Glenville, Hollick, L Mullaney, M Mullaney, Pendlebury, Sheppard-Bools, Walker, Webber-Jones and P Williams voted FOR the motion (16);

Councillors C Allen, R Allen, Cook, Ladkin, Roberts, Smith and H Williams abstained from voting.

Having declared an interest in this item, Councillors Bill, W Crooks, Hodgkins, Lynch, Morrell, Nichols and O’Shea did not take part in the vote.

The motion was declared CARRIED and it was

RESOLVED –

- (i) The principle embodied in the economy strand of the borough’s climate change strategy which seeks to ensure that council’s investments are place in environmental and socially responsible stewardship be reaffirmed;
- (ii) The scale of the council’s carbon footprint in relation to pension investments be calculated and published;
- (iii) Leicestershire County Council’s pension fund be called on to bring forward a transparent plan to divest from fossil fuels by 2030 through the development and adoption of responsible investment policies that:
 - a. Stop investment in energy companies actively exploiting new fossil fuel reserves;
 - b. Divest from direct ownership and any commingled funds that include fossil fuel public equities and corporate bonds unless the specific funds are being used exclusively to

- develop or support renewables, carbon capture, hydrogen or other decarbonisation technology;
- c. Instruct its fund managers to pursue an active investment strategy in companies with a verified commitment to and track record of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and minimising climate risk.

(The Meeting closed at 8.51 pm)

MAYOR