

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

19 JUNE 2012 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: MR MB CARTWRIGHT - MAYOR  
MRS L HODGKINS – DEPUTY MAYOR

Mr RG Allen, Mr PR Batty, Mr DC Bill, Mr SL Bray, Mrs R Camamile,  
Mr DS Cope, Mr WJ Crooks, Mr DM Gould, Mr PAS Hall, Mrs WA Hall,  
Mr MS Hulbert, Mr DW Inman, Mr C Ladkin, Mr MR Lay,  
Mr KWP Lynch, Mr R Mayne, Mr JS Moore, Mr K Morrell,  
Mr MT Mullaney, Mr K Nichols, Mr LJP O'Shea, Mrs H Smith,  
Mrs S Sprason, Mr BE Sutton, Miss DM Taylor, Mr R Ward and  
Ms BM Witherford

Officers in attendance: Bill Cullen, Louisa Horton, Sanjiv Kohli, Rebecca Owen and Sharon Stacey

59 PRAYER

Prayer was offered by Rev Louise Corke.

60 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bannister, Bessant, Boothby, Chastney and Richards.

61 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

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

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meetings held on 17 April and 15 May 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

62 ITEM OF URGENT BUSINESS - APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON CHARITABLE BODY: HINCKLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

It was reported that there was one item of business which had been deemed urgent due to need to appoint to the charitable body of Hinckley Grammar School. It was agreed that the item would be taken at this juncture.

Councillor Lynch declared a personal interest in this item as his wife had been nominated for re-appointment.

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

RESOLVED – Mrs M Lynch, Mrs A Wright and Mrs R Wright be re-appointed to Hinckley Grammar School for a term of three years.

63 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

64 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor briefly outlined the events he had attended over the Jubilee weekend and thanked the Deputy Mayor for attending some events too.

65 PETITIONS RECEIVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S PETITIONS' SCHEME

Councillor Mullaney presented a petition from residents against a telecom mast. It was agreed that this would be passed onto the Development Control team as part of the consultation on the particular application concerned and did not fall under the Petitions Scheme.

66 LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S POSITION STATEMENT

The Leader of Council thanked officers, parishes and communities for the Jubilee events that had been held, and he reported on the unveiling of a plaque in Argents Mead from the Queen. He also provided an update on free parking initiatives in Hinckley and a letter from Leicestershire County Council's Cabinet portfolio holder for Waste inviting amalgamation of waste collection authorities in the County. In response to the latter it was felt that the amalgamation would not benefit Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council due to our already high performance.

67 MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION MEETINGS HELD ON 13 MARCH, 19 APRIL & 26 APRIL 2012

Councillor Lay presented the minutes of Scrutiny Commission meetings held on 13 March and 19 & 26 April for information.

68 REGIONAL GROWTH FUND - CONTRACT & DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS

Members were presented with a report on contract & delivery arrangements for the Regional Growth Fund of £19,474,000. Members welcomed the report and the opportunities outlined, however, some concern was expressed about potential time delays and difficulties in drawing down funding in light of the Government having abolished organisations which supported economic growth.

Councillor Gould entered the meeting at this point.

On the motion of Councillor Bray, seconded by Councillor Bill, it was

RESOLVED –

- (i) The Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader be granted delegated authority to sign off the final contract arrangements for the RGF offer;
- (ii) The establishment of a budget of £19,474,000 for the RGF project to be spent over the next two years be approved.

69 SUPPORTING NEW HOUSING INITIATIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Council received a report which provided information on opportunities and initiatives for improving services and supporting the provision of new and improved affordable housing in the Borough of Hinckley & Bosworth. During discussion, the following points were raised:

- The need to avoid building new large 'council estates' and Members' preference towards pepper potting affordable homes throughout estates;
- Concern regarding the high number of empty residential properties in Earl Shilton;
- The risk of council house waiting lists lengthening in light of the Government's renewed Right to Buy scheme;
- The potential for rent arrears to increase due to a reduction in benefits and the way that these were to be paid.

In response to some of these points it was suggested that the Government be lobbied regarding Right to Buy, that work was being undertaken to identify those who may struggle to make payments due to a reduction in benefit payments, and that a private sector leasing scheme would be developed, funded through the Empty Homes Grant, to enable empty properties to be brought back into use. Members were reminded that there was currently a high level of satisfaction with the Council's housing service.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the Council Housing Investment Strategy and Business Plan be approved;
- (ii) the information contained within the report be endorsed;
- (iii) the Council's approach to the negotiations on affordable rent products with developers be approved;
- (iv) the principles of the Council's affordable housing delivery plan be supported;
- (v) the achievement of the private sector housing team in securing an Empty Property Grant of £522,120 from the Homes and Communities Agency be welcomed and a supplementary expenditure and income budget for this amount be agreed;
- (vi) the work undertaken by the Housing Options team to prevent homelessness be acknowledged, along with the award of a grant for £50,015 for the prevention of homelessness due to mortgage arrears and a supplementary expenditure and income budget for this amount be agreed.

70 LEICESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP REVENUES & BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP 2011/12

In presenting a report on the savings of the Leicestershire Partnership Revenues & Benefits 2011/12, it was stated that the savings had been as anticipated and explained that due to having to reduce time taken to process applications and meet the agreed Improvement Plan, the recommendation was that the savings be retained by the partnership.

On the motion of Councillor Lynch, seconded by Councillor Bray, it was

RESOLVED – The retention of £70,898 within the Partnership as this Council's contribution to the Partnership Reserves in 2012/13 be approved.

A report, which had been prepared at short notice due to the Commencement Order for Chapter 7 of the Localism Act being laid on 8 June 2012 and the new regime being due to commence on 1 July 2012, was presented to Council. Members were reminded that the new regime was originally discussed at Council on 17 April and a cross party working group had been set up to consider the issues including drafting a code of conduct. It was further noted that the meeting on 17 April had agreed that the interviewing of Independent Persons should be undertaken by an officer panel but that the final decision on who to appoint be made by Council.

During presentation of the report a further recommendation was made that the selection of Members of the new Committee be delegated to the relevant group leader in consultation with the Monitoring Officer. It was also recommended that no Parish Council representative be appointed to the Committee as many Borough Councillors were also Parish Councillors so parishes would be represented in that way. It was also recommended that the Committee be named the "Ethical Governance and Personnel Committee".

It was noted that a further meeting of the working group was planned for the same week and that it was recommended that they would put more detail into the process for dealing with complaints, agree accompanying guidance and the Register of Interest form.

Many Members acknowledged the amount of work undertaken by the Monitoring Officer, Executive Member and working group and thanked them for this. It was, however, felt that paragraph 1(d) of the Code of Conduct should have additional words added and it was moved by Councillor Lay and seconded by Councillor Batty that 1(d) be amended to read "Not disclose or use confidential information for any other purpose other than that provided by the law unless it is in the public interest". Upon being put to the vote, the amendment was CARRIED. It was therefore

RESOLVED –

- (i) the Code of Conduct be adopted with the inclusion of the above mentioned additional words in 1(d);
- (ii) the appointment of a Committee to deal with the administration of complaints about Councillors be delegated to group leaders in consultation with the Monitoring Officer;
- (iii) the Committee be named the "Ethical Governance and Personnel Committee";
- (iv) the co-option of Parish Council representatives on the Committee be not supported;
- (v) Nine Independent Persons be appointed in line with the recommendations;
- (vi) the Regulations regarding Pecuniary Interests be noted;
- (vii) Agreement of the process for dealing with the administration of complaints and the contents of the Register of Interests be delegated to the cross party working group in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer.

72 MOTIONS RECEIVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES 13.1 AND 13.2:-

Motion from Councillor Gould, seconded by Councillor Bill

“In view of the Economic Regeneration currently going ahead in the Borough, and the need to achieve modal shift not least to mitigate against climate change, this Council calls on the Department for Transport when refranchising rail services stopping at Hinckley for 2014 to reinstate the 2 trains per hour service level that was previously enjoyed throughout the day”.

RESOLVED – the motion be supported.

(The Meeting closed at 8.06 pm)

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MAYOR