

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

17 APRIL 2012 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: MR R MAYNE - MAYOR  
MR MB CARTWRIGHT – DEPUTY MAYOR

Mr RG Allen, Mr JG Bannister, Mr PR Batty, Mr Bessant, Mr DC Bill,  
Mr SL Bray, Mrs R Camamile, Mrs T Chastney, Mr DS Cope,  
Mr WJ Crooks, Mr DM Gould, Mr PAS Hall, Mrs WA Hall,  
Mrs L Hodgkins, Mr MS Hulbert, Mr DW Inman, Mr C Ladkin,  
Mr KWP Lynch, Mr JS Moore, Mr K Morrell, Mr MT Mullaney,  
Mr K Nichols, Mrs J Richards, Mrs H Smith, Mrs S Sprason,  
Mr BE Sutton, Miss DM Taylor, Mr R Ward and Ms BM Witherford

Officers in attendance: Steve Atkinson, Michael Brymer, Bill Cullen, Shaun Curtis, Edwina Grant, Louisa Horton, Yvonne Hughes and Rebecca Owen

478 APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors Boothby, Lay and O'Shea.

479 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Mrs Richards stated that, contrary to the minutes, Councillor Ladkin had left the previous meeting before her. On the motion of Councillor Bray, seconded by Councillor Bill, it was

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2012 be confirmed subject to the abovementioned amendment and signed by the Chairman.

480 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

481 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor highlighted some of his recent events including his involvement in the Big Splash and his recent lunch with the Queen and Prince Philip. He thanked Councillor Taylor for doing a bungee jump to raise funds for his charities.

482 QUESTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NUMBER 11.1

a) Question asked by Councillor WJ Crooks and addressed to the Executive Member for Finance

“Would the executive Member for Finance, ICT and Asset Management please advise me what Posts/Facilities are being funded by the Borough in some villages, but not in others? I am aware that we put money into Market Bosworth for the Christmas Lights, but other anomalies have come to my notice.”

Response from Councillor KWP Lynch

“Thank you Councillor Crooks for your question. The following expenditure in villages/ parishes was funded by this Council in the last financial year”:

	<u>2011/12</u> <u>Budgeted</u> <u>£</u>	
Xmas Lights assistance per Parish	1,960	£50 per parish
Xmas Lights Market Bosworth	3,340	
Markfield Community Centre	16,690	Centre Manager Post assistance (Gross payment is £27.9k. HBBC receive a contribution of £11.2k)
Arts Development Assistance	1,000	Can be in or out of the Borough
Parish and Community Fund	100,000	
Borough Improvements	50,000	£15k external funding
Wall Fronts (Barwell)	9,300	100% externally funded
Shop Fronts (Barwell)	30,085	100% externally funded
Summer activities	1,960	Contributions given to groups or parishes. In Parishes or Hinckley maximum payments were £100. Can be in and out of the Borough
One-off to Sport in Desford	5,000	

£219,335

Net cost to HBBC £164,950

Excludes

Home Improvement Grants

Private Sector Housing grants given to homeowners if they meet criteria

Councillor Crooks said he would ask supplementary questions of officers outside of the meeting.

b) Question asked by Councillor RG Allen and addressed to the Leader of Council

“Will the Leader please provide Members details of and key conclusions of the research undertaken by and on behalf of HBBC on the anticipated effects of footfall in Castle Street and Hinckley town centre, as a result of moving the council offices from Hinckley Town centre out to Hawley Road?”

Response from Councillor SL Bray

“It is important to set the context that there are many impacts on footfall in the town centre, of which this development is but one. There are a number of other developments, some involving this Council, but others also of a private nature.

The Town Centre Partnership, working with this Council, has installed footfall counters at various locations in the town over the last year and, whilst week by week monitoring is proving useful, longer term comparisons and projections can not be made on the information period over which data has been collected. This will be undertaken and analyses made as we build up our information base.

As Cllr Allen will be aware, the location of the Hub, at the south of the centre, is a balance to the developments already in place in the north west quarter of the town -the Atkins Building and the New College; both of which are fully anticipated to increase town centre footfall from that area. I will be happy to show longer term comparisons and projections, when we have more meaningful information to present.”

Councillor Allen asked when specific facts for such a significant project would be available and residents would be informed. In response the Leader felt that all facts had been available throughout the discussions.

- c) Question asked by Councillor PS Bessant and addressed to the Leader of Council

“Would the Leader please provide Members with an update on progress around securing appropriate and considerate redevelopment of the Council Offices site adjacent to the Argents Mead Park – whilst still achieving the £3 M capital receipt the Administrations Medium Term Financial strategy recent adopted?”

Response from Councillor SL Bray

“The procurement process agreed by Executive on 12 October 2011 has commenced. At the end of Stage One - inviting expressions of interest - three bids were received from potential developers. Stage Two of the process will commence imminently and all three bidders will be asked to prepare schematic proposals and submit financial offers.

The outcome of this process should be known by the end of June 2012 and will be reported to the next available Council.”

As a supplementary question, Councillor Bessant asked for reassurance that the proposals were still on track to meet the requirements of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and to achieve a £3m capital receipt. In response Councillor Bray stated that development on the site would be sympathetic and would expand on the current green space provision.

- d) Question asked by Councillor PS Bessant and addressed to the Executive Member for Housing

“Would the Housing Portfolio Holder please update Members on how many new Council Houses this authority will be adding to its stock in the next 10 years given the financial ‘headroom’ the HRA buyout now provides?”

Response from Councillor DS Cope

“Can I remind him of the answers given to both Scrutiny Commission and Council recently on the positive steps being taken to address this issue.

As Cllr Bessant is aware, HRA self financing provides an opportunity, never before available to council landlords, to positively invest in and develop their council house services for the benefit of current and future tenants. This Administration is embracing these new opportunities and from the 1 April 2012 we are able to drive our own priorities and make decisions which will impact for future generations.

The new arrangements offer a package of exciting opportunities relating to: increasing the amount of housing stock by new build, acquisitions and bringing empty homes into use, as well as improvements to our existing properties to raise our standards even higher than they are already. Whilst I would want to ensure that any adopted strategy is for the benefit of all tenants, present and future, it is important that we consult existing tenants as part of this process.

Now that the Council has agreed the overall structure for the debt repayment which secures the maximum headroom, work has begun to produce a strategy which will be underpinned by robust information, informed by tenant consultation and produce maximum value for money. As stated to both Scrutiny Commission and Council, a HRA Strategy and Business Plan will be presented to Members in June. Until that point, it would be purely speculative to put forward any figures, whilst that work is undertaken. I am sure that Cllr Bessant and all Members in this Chamber would want a strategy of this magnitude and impact to receive full and detailed consideration; which is what this Administration intends to do."

Councillor Bessant asked for a definite answer on the number of new council properties that would be built using the 'headroom' and the percentage of the headroom that would be taken up with improvements to existing housing stock. The Executive Member agreed to respond to him in writing.

e) Question asked by Councillor JS Moore and addressed to the Leader of Council

"The Council's letterheads bear the 'Fairtrade' logo and claim Hinckley and Bosworth is proud to be a Fairtrade Borough. Therefore, would the Leader detail in precise terms to what extent the Council's commitment to Fairtrade is reflected in terms of the drinks, snacks, refreshments, foods, wines, buffets, etc that are available on a regular basis in all of the Authority's premises (including the Mayor's Parlour) and at all events, receptions, etc organised by the Borough Council?"

Response from Councillor SL Bray

"As it happens, I have much of the information readily to hand, as Cllr Hulbert raised the same query last August. The response that was given then still applies. It was:

Committee Rooms 1 and 3 - Café Bar only dispenses Fairtrade Coffee, with optional Fairtrade sugar. The coffee that is available from the Café Bar in Committee Room 3 is Fairtrade coffee which is purchased in large tins, with the machine being replenished as required.

Committee Room 2 - Flavia Machine dispensing Rainforest Alliance tea and coffee. To ensure ethical goods are used, we did request that Flavia supply Rainforest Alliance as they do not currently supply Fairtrade. With the type of machine, we are unable to use alternative suppliers for the drinks sachets. This has been assessed recently, and was agreed that it was not economically viable to replace the machine at this stage with the imminent relocation to the Hinckley Hub. Fairtrade options are to be available when we move to the Hub.

There are three hot drink pay vend machines within the council offices and one at Middlefield Lane Depot, all of which have Fairtrade options for coffee, hot chocolate and tea. This is supplied by Selecta who replenish and maintain the machines.

In addition, it is a requirement in any contracts we have with outside caterers that they provide a specified amount of Fairtrade goods in any provision they make for Council events. Provision in the Mayor's Parlour is at the discretion of the Mayor in office in any specific year."

483 LEADER'S POSITION STATEMENT

The Leader in his position statement referred to the Secretary of State having approved the Compulsory Purchase Order on the bus station site, forthcoming celebrations for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the challenges presented in light of the localisation of business rates and Council Tax discount and work being undertaken with partners on the issue of Troubled Families.

484 MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

In presenting the minutes of the Scrutiny Commission meetings held on 30 January and 1 March 2012, Councillor Mr Hall highlighted the on-going review into Care of People with Dementia.

485 VALUE FOR MONEY REPORT

The Executive Member outlined recent successes and the value for money presented by Street Scene Services. Discussion ensued around the new commercial waste service which had been underway for nine months and how this could not be compared with the service provided by Blaby District Council as their service had been in place for many years. The year on year savings made within the service were commended and all managers and staff within the service area were thanked for their work. On the motion of Councillor Crooks, seconded by Councillor Bray it was

RESOLVED – the value for money of Street Scene Services and continued internal provision of refused, recycling, street cleansing and grounds maintenance to at least March 2018 be approved.

486 EQUALITY POLICY

In presenting this report the Executive Member provided the background to the development of the report and to the Single Equality Scheme and stated that the comments of the Scrutiny Commission had now been incorporated. It was moved by Councillor Witherford, seconded by Councillor Bray and

RESOLVED – the Partnership Single Equality Scheme be approved.

487 LOCALISM ACT - PREDETERMINATION

Council received a report which informed them of the coming into force of section 25 of the Localism Act 2011 relating to predetermination. In summarising the key issues, the Executive Member explained that having previously given a view on a matter did not show a 'closed mind' and therefore a Member could remain in a meeting and participate in discussion and voting on that matter. Members of the Planning Committee in particular welcomed this change and the difference it would make in being able to support the community. It was moved by Councillor Witherford, seconded by Councillor Bray and

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

488 LOCALISM ACT - STANDARDS

Members received a report which had been endorsed by the Standards Committee and sought to outline the changes to the system of regulation of standards of conduct for elected Members in local authorities. It was noted that contrary to early suggestions of the Coalition Government, a code of conduct would be mandatory and the local authority would still be responsible for determining complaints. It was however explained that a big difference was that there would no longer be Independent Members, but that 'Independent Persons' would need to be appointed. These would have an entirely different role to the former Independent Members and would act in an advisory role, but would not be Co-opted Members of the authority. In the new regime, a Standards Committee would not be essential as determining complaints would be a Council function which could then be delegated to a smaller Committee, which would have to be politically balanced. It was suggested that this should be entitled 'Ethical Governance Committee'.

Members expressed concern about having a politically balanced Committee to determine complaints but acknowledged that this was set out in the Act. Concern was also expressed about the appointment of Independent Persons and whilst generally in support of the suggestion to appoint a pool of Independent Persons across the Leicestershire districts, Members wished to have input into the final selection of those who would be the advisors for this authority.

It was proposed by Councillor Bray and seconded by Councillor Moore that a working group be set up to consider the process that this authority should follow and to select the Independent Persons. This amendment was agreed.

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

RESOLVED –

- (i) the changes made to the regime by the Localism Act be noted;
- (ii) the proposal to jointly recruit a pool of Independent Persons be agreed;
- (iii) a working group be set up to consider the process and select this authority's Independent Persons;
- (iv) a report on the draft Code of Conduct and Regulations be brought back to Council when available.

489 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND EAST MIDLANDS COUNCILLOR DEVELOPMENT CHARTER

The Executive Member presented a report which introduced the Member Development Strategy and gauged support for pursuing the East Midlands Councillor Development Charter. The level of Member involvement and support required was highlighted and it was suggested that the timescale for the current round of Development Needs Assessments be extended.

Members were in support of continuing work towards the Charter and acknowledged the work already undertaken by the Member Development Steering Group in monitoring and reviewing progress against the action plan.

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

RESOLVED –

- (i) the timescale for the 2012 Development Needs Assessments be extended;
- (ii) the Member Development Strategy be approved;
- (iii) the Councillor Development Charter be pursued.

490 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Members were presented with the proposed terms of reference to be used in the Community Governance Review. On the motion of Councillor Bray, seconded by Councillor Witherford, it was

RESOLVED – the Community Governance Review and associated terms of reference be approved for publication.

491 COMMITMENT TO AND IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPACT LEICESTERSHIRE

Council was provided with the background to Compact Leicestershire and its development. It was moved by Councillor Bill, seconded by Councillor Bray and

RESOLVED – the adoption and implementation of Compact Leicestershire be supported.

492 MOTIONS RECEIVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES 13.1 AND 13.2

- (a) It was noted that this motion had been withdrawn.
- (b) Motion from Councillor Morrell

This Council notes the concerns of local people in a number of areas in the Borough in respect of the proposed development of wind farms in the vicinity of their homes, and the potential of such turbines to create low-frequency noise (infrasound) disturbance to residents along with a significant loss of amenity.

To this end, in order to protect local residents, this Council resolves that detailed planning policies be examined and adopted to ensure:

- i) Wind farm proposals should not be permitted if they would have a significant long term detrimental impact on the amenity of people living nearby;
- ii) A separation distance of at least 2km between wind turbines and residential properties.

Many Members expressed concerns with regards to wind turbines and farms and felt that the Planning Committee should be asked to consider putting policies in place. It was moved by Councillor Crooks and seconded by Councillor Lynch that the matter be referred to the Planning Committee. The AMENDMENT was subsequently agreed. It was

RESOLVED –

- (i) the motion be supported;
- (ii) Council amends the relevant policy statements to ensure that this is put into effect.

493 MATTERS FROM WHICH THE PUBLIC MAY BE EXCLUDED

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

RESOLVED – in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 10 of Part I of Schedule 12A of that Act

494 PROPOSED CONVERSION OF TOP FLOOR OF ATKINS BUILDING

A report was presented which sought approval for the conversion of the void open plan office space on the top floor of the Atkins Building into serviced office space. It was moved by Councillor Lynch, seconded by Councillor Bray and

RESOLVED – the investment of £60,000 be approved towards the refurbishment of the top floor to allow for the provision of an additional ten office units.

(The Meeting closed at 8.10 pm)

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MAYOR