

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

5 OCTOBER 2021 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: CLLR E HOLLICK - MAYOR
 CLLR DT GLENVILLE – DEPUTY MAYOR

Cllr DC Bill MBE, Cllr CW Boothby, Cllr SL Bray, Cllr MB Cartwright,
Cllr JMT Collett, Cllr MA Cook, Cllr DS Cope, Cllr MJ Crooks,
Cllr WJ Crooks, Cllr DJ Findlay, Cllr REH Flemming, Cllr L Hodgkins,
Cllr C Ladkin, Cllr MR Lay, Cllr KWP Lynch, Cllr LJ Mullaney,
Cllr MT Mullaney, Cllr LJP O'Shea, Cllr A Pendlebury, Cllr RB Roberts,
Cllr MC Sheppard-Bools, Cllr BR Walker and Cllr P Williams

Officers in attendance: Mark Brymer, Bill Cullen, Julie Kenny and Rebecca Owen

170 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors C Allen, R Allen, Gibbens, Morrell, Nichols, Smith, Webber-Jones and H Williams.

171 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

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

RESOLVED – the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a correct record.

172 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

173 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reported on the very successful Proms in the Park event on 4 September. He also reported on a visit to Hinckley Museum and the classic car show organised by Hinckley BID. The Mayor congratulated those involved in organising the events.

174 QUESTIONS

(a) Question from Councillor L Mullaney to the Leader of the Council:

“Leader, may I ask what the key objectives and positive outcomes that have arisen from the Crescent regeneration scheme and what the people of Hinckley have said about their priorities for it and how have we reported on the scheme’s commercial performance?”

Response from Councillor Bray:

“The Council set out its ambition for the bus station site in its development brief published in 2007. These are summarised as follows:

- Significantly improve the retail shopping offer
- Deliver new leisure facilities including a state of the art multi-screen cinema
- Secure a high quality building
- Achieve a sustainable development that enhanced the public realm of the town centre.

A number of key objectives underpinned this ambition:

- To provide retail, leisure and other facilities for the local community to meet identified need and help sustain the vitality and visibility of the town centre
- Contribute for the growth and improvement of the town centre with new quality retail and leisure facilities, leading to improved investor confidence in Hinckley
- Assist in preventing the identified leakage of spend out of Hinckley to competing centres
- To vastly improve the ambience of the area for those who work and live in the vicinity of the site
- Restoring community pride in the area
- Providing a major employment opportunity in a sustainable location, creating new investment opportunities and over 600 new jobs
- Addressing the existing town centre transport issues by providing an improved bus station for the town, together with enhance public parking provision
- Bringing significant improvements to the built environment and landscape of the town
- Creating and enhancing pedestrian and cycle routes through the site and enhancing linkage with the rest of the town centre
- Creating new areas of landscaping, public areas and open space to improve the environmental and public realm of the area.

All of these key objectives have been met. In addition, an independent report commissioned in 2015 placed Hinckley in the top 5% of retail footprint centres in the UK as a result of the development and improved its standing from 23rd to the 11th largest retail footprint centre in the East Midlands.

Further independent economic assessments that have been undertaken also demonstrate the significant economic impact of the Crescent. In 2017, a study undertaken by Amion showed the total economic impact being generated by the scheme for Hinckley town centre was more than £20M net additional GVA per annum, with over 1,000 additional jobs generated linked to an £82M capital investment into the scheme.

A further economic study undertaken by Warwickshire Economics in 2019 highlighted that Hinckley town centre generated £178M of GVA to the local economy with retail and leisure accounting for £57.6M GVA (45.5%).

It is, therefore, clear that despite the economic and more recent Covid Pandemic challenges, the Crescent has been a huge success, contributing significantly to the economic and physical regeneration of the town centre.

The residents of the borough have told us what's important to them. In fact, as early as 2006 a survey of the boroughs' residents highlighted that 45% of all respondents selected cinema as their top priority for new facilities in Hinckley, with over a quarter of all young people voting this as their top choices.

This was further reinforced with the feedback on the shortlisted developer schemes with people voting the Tin Hat Crescent scheme with its mix of uses as their favourite. Ultimately, when the former administration decided to sell off the cinema and restaurant block, the residents of the borough voted with their feet and supported the current administration's campaign to retain these important facilities in Council ownership.

The commercial return of the project has never been a top priority for the Council – moreover, it has been the wider economic and physical transformation and impact that the scheme would bring to the town as already referenced.

The Council has considered reports on the commercial arrangement and performance of the Crescent dating back to 2013. In more recent years, reports on Block C have been considered by Scrutiny Commission and Council in 2018, 2019 and there have been questions responded to at Council – the most recent in December 2020 by the Leader of the Conservative Group.”

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

“Can the Executive member for Finance please confirm the total amount of funding received from the Government to assist with the Coronavirus pandemic? Can the Executive member also confirm the total amount of Coronavirus assistance funding distributed by this council to local business, councils and worthy causes?”

Response from Councillor Lynch:

“Other government grant income to give support to the council for loss of income, additional costs and new burdens was £3,602,739. This was for 2020/21, there will be some more for 2021/22, but not finally settled year, but approximately £1.1m so far. There was also S31 support to cover the reliefs given to retail business, which meant we had to stand down the business rates collected of £5,401,499 (£3.9m was for 2020/21, the rest is 2021/22).

As at 27 September 2021, the value of grants paid was £36,404,157 with the number of individual grants made being 7037 since March 2020. (Note that businesses may have had more than one grant, so the 7037 does not represent separate businesses).”

By way of supplementary question, Councillor Collett asked for confirmation that the figure for the value of grants paid of £36,404,157 was correct. This was confirmed.

175 LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S POSITION STATEMENT

In his position statement, the leader referred to:

- General support for the county council's expression of interest to government for a devolution deal
- Work to support Afghan resettlement
- The successful policing operation in relation to “County Lines”
- The reopening of the Meadows Community Centre in Burbage
- The recent VCS celebration and handover of voluntary sector support from Next Generation to the RCC
- Recent successful events including Proms in the Park
- Guidance received to support residents in organising street parties to celebrate the platinum jubilee
- The launch of a new round of recovery grants for local businesses.

176 MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

The chairman of the Scrutiny Commission presented the minutes of the last meeting.

177 GAMBLING ACT POLICY

The refreshed Gambling policy (statement of principles) was presented to members. It was moved by Councillor Cartwright, seconded by Councillor Sheppard-Bools and

RESOLVED – the Gambling Policy be adopted.

178 ARRANGEMENTS FOR APPOINTING THE EXTERNAL AUDITORS

Members received a report which contained options for appointing external auditors from 2023/24. Members sought reassurance that previous issues with delays in the external audit process had been overcome. It was moved by Councillor Lynch, seconded by Councillor Cope and

RESOLVED – the external audit provider continue to be appointed under the PSAA procurement contract.

179 MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR M MULLANEY AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR FINDLAY

The following motion was moved by Councillor M Mullaney and seconded by Councillor Pendlebury:

“Council notes that the £20 a week Universal Credit uplift is coming to an end on 6 October.

According to the Joseph Rowntree Trust, 6,790 families locally will be hit by the £20 a week Universal Credit reduction.

The cut in Universal Credit comes at a time when many people are struggling to meet the costs of rising energy bills and many low income working people will also be hit by National Insurance rises from April 2023.

Council calls on the government to drop its plans to reduce Universal Credit and to make the Universal Credit Uplift permanent.

Council resolves to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the Universal Credit uplift to be made permanent.”

Councillor Bray, supported by nine further councillors, requested that voting on the motion be recorded. The vote was recorded as follows:

Councillors Bill, Bray, Cartwright, Cope, M Crooks, W Crooks, Findlay, Flemming, Glenville, Hodgkins, Hollick, Lay, Lynch, L Mullaney, M Mullaney, Pendlebury, Sheppard-Bools, Walker and Williams voted FOR the motion (19);

Councillors Boothby, Collett, Cook, Ladkin, O’Shea and Roberts voted AGAINST the motion (6).

The motion was therefore declared CARRIED and it was

RESOLVED – a letter be sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling on the government to drop its plans to reduce universal credit and to make the universal credit uplift permanent.

(The Meeting closed at 7.30 pm)

MAYOR