

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

26 April 2022 AT 6.30 pm

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

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

Officers in attendance: Matthew Bowers, Bill Cullen, Paul Grundy, Julie Kenny, Rebecca Owen, Caroline Roffey and Madeline Shellard

399. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Boothby, Findlay, Gibbens, O'Shea and H Williams.

400. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

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

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meetings held on 22 & 24 February 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

401. **Declarations of interest**

No interests were declared.

402. **Mayor's Communications**

The Mayor reported on events attended throughout March and April.

403. **Questions**

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

“Following on from Cllr Boothby’s question to Council on 25 January 2022, can the lead member provide me with an updated position on the following points as of 26 April 2022:

- i. Spend YTD on consultants and temporary staff cover
- ii. Provide an update on recruitment for all vacant positions within the planning and enforcement function
- iii. Confirm the number of planning applications received awaiting verification

- iv. Confirm the number of planning applications awaiting decision split between minor and major
- v. Spend YTD on planning appeals
- vi. Confirm the number of planning applications approaching, at or past their target decision date (ie at risk of appeal for non-determination)."

Response from the Executive member for Planning:

"Councillor Allen, thank you for your question. I know that updates have been provided to the Planning Committee and at the Leaders' meetings on this matter but I am happy to provide some statistics for you as requested. I am pleased to report the number of outstanding applications is reducing and would like to thank the team for all their hard work on achieving this.

- i. Spend YTD on consultants and temporary staff cover

To be reported through the normal budget reporting cycle

- ii. Provide an update on recruitment for all vacant positions within the planning and enforcement function

Of the nine professional planner roles in development management, three are occupied by permanent staff. Three more have been offered and have accepted and are awaiting paperwork to be completed. This leaves three vacant. Vacancies are being covered by interim staff and contracts.

Of the four professional planner role sin enforcement, one is occupied on a part time basis and two more are occupied full time by permanent staff. One role remains vacant and is being covered by an interim member.

Of the five professional planner roles in policy, three are occupied by permanent staff. One has been offered and accepted and is awaiting paperwork to be completed. This leaves one vacant. Vacancies are being covered by interim staff and contracts.

Of the six professional roles in major projects, five are occupied by permanent staff. One has just become vacant following retirement of the post holder.

Of the five support officer roles, there is one vacancy being covered by a member of staff from within the team and a temporary member of staff has been brought in to backfill.

- iii. Confirm the number of planning applications received awaiting verification

As of 1 April 2022 there were ten applications not including TPOs and pre-apps awaiting validation.

- iv. Confirm the number of planning applications awaiting decision split between minor and major

As of 1 April 2022 there were 52 outstanding major applications (not including those with a resolution to grant awaiting S106)

As of 1 April 2022 there were 115 outstanding minor applications (not including those with a resolution to grant awaiting S106)

As of 1 April 2022 there were 300 outstanding other applications (not including those with a resolution to grant awaiting S106).

- v. Spend YTD on planning appeals

To be reported through the normal budget reporting cycle.

- vi. Confirm the number of planning applications approaching, at or past their target decision date (ie at risk of appeal for non-determination)

As of 1 April 2022 there were 37 applications past their target date with no extension of time agreed."

By way of supplementary question further to point vi above, Councillor Allen asked how many applications were outstanding with agreement for an extension. The Executive member agreed to provide the figures to Councillor Allen outside of the meeting.

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

"Following on from Cllr O'Shea's question to Council on 25 January 2022 and repeated requests from myself, will the lead member for finance provide me with a detailed breakdown of the costs of the brown bin and blue lid bin recycling schemes separately, by cost item by year for the past five years."

Response from the Executive member for finance:

"I would like to thank Councillor Allen for the question and following the previous request from Councillor O'Shea, I can advise that a report setting out the cost of the garden waste service has been produced and will be presented to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Commission. Any further queries outstanding or arising from that report can be addressed through that meeting.

The period to the year-end close is particularly demanding and the finance team has had to deal with covid grants coming to a closedown on 31 March and ensuring all funds that can be used were spent by 31 March 2022. It is also a time of preparing the more pressing matter of the budget for 2022/23 and related reports in a time of uncertainty, which obviously had to take precedence over more historically based reviews on past reported decisions."

Councillor Furlong entered the meeting at 6.40pm.

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

“As councillors we all have a responsibility to ensure the financial well-being of this council. To this end will the lead member for finance undertake to introduce a report to the scrutiny committee detailing for accounts in credit

- Account opening balances
- Monies in
- Monies out
- Closing balance

For accounts in deficit

- Account opening balances
- Monies in
- Monies out
- Interest charged
- Repayments made
- Closing balance

In time for the next schedule scrutiny committee and all future meetings to provide members with an at-a-glance summary of this council’s financial position.”

Response from the Executive member:

“I would like to thank Councillor Allen for his question and interest in the finances of the council. As Councillor Allen will already be aware, there are a number of reports that are already presented and discussed at Finance & Performance Scrutiny in relation to the council’s financial position. I would therefore propose that this matter is discussed at the next such meeting to enable all members of that committee to determine the level of reporting required that is proportionate and relevant for the purposes members require.

I have assumed that you refer to bank accounts, rather than general ledger accounts, as the latter would take considerable resources and not really add anything further to budget reports that are already reported in year. In terms of bank accounts, the council only operates three bank accounts, not including the Mayor’s charity account. For these three accounts, one is used for payments, one is a more general account used mainly for receipts and the third is the elections account which is ring fenced. These accounts are not allowed to go overdrawn and we do not run an overdraft arrangement with our bank, to avoid charges for such an arrangement.

If members are interested in the cash flow of the council, this is already reported in the financial statements annually as a primary statement and any member can review these at any time. The financial statements are

subject to external audit and our auditors have no concerns with our cash position or going concern projections to date. The cash flow in the financial statements clearly links our income and expenditure position to the cash held and has disclosure on cash flows from operating activities, investing activities and from financing activities. I have asked the finance team and they are happy to give further training to any members who wish to have a better understanding of this statement.

I would also like to point out that the question suggests rather a simplistic understanding of how a complex organisation such as a local authority operates, as there are large amounts of cash collected on behalf of other bodies, such as council tax and business rates, and more recently there has been significant amounts of cash received from government that is merely passing through our accounts en route to businesses as part of the covid support scheme. Also, we have cash constantly being placed in short term investments that sits outside the bank account cash held while invested. It may be better to discuss at Finance & Performance Scrutiny what it is exactly that members are seeking assurance on, so as to better frame the request for information and to avoid any time being wasted in providing information that does not meet members' requirements."

404. Leader of the Council's Position Statement

In his position statement, the Leader referred to:

- Support for Ukraine
- MIRA investment
- Events planned as part of Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations
- The council being recognised as a Platinum Council for its support for the Big Jubilee Lunch
- Burbage Common open day
- Tourism within the borough including the opening of Gruffalo Adventure Land at Twycross Zoo, the Battlefield Centre and Triumph Motorcycle Museum
- Business grants
- Council tax energy rebate
- Local plan and neighbourhood plans
- Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange consultation.

405. Minutes of the Scrutiny Commission

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

406. Council Housing Asset Management Strategy

Consideration was given to the council housing asset management strategy. During discussion, the following points were made:

- Alternative solutions to gas boilers would be investigated in future

- Energy efficiency would be a priority, including ensuring double glazing was in good condition
- A tenants conference was planned for September, to which councillors would be invited.

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

RESOLVED – the council housing asset management strategy be approved and the action plan noted.

407. **Urgent works at Bradgate Stables**

Members received a report which sought agreement of a course of action and strategy to address the works required at Bradgate Stables. The historical value of the building was noted and a member visit was suggested, along with the taking of photographs for the council's archives. It was moved by Councillor Bill, seconded by Councillor Cartwright and unanimously

RESOLVED – The course of action and strategy for Bradgate Stables be agreed, including the use of enforcement powers, in particular:

- (i) The presentation of an urgent works schedule and specification to the owner be approved, giving notice that the council intends to carry out the specified urgent works;
- (ii) The serving of the Urgent Works Notice upon the owner be approved, should no clear commitment to the works being undertaken voluntarily be provided;
- (iii) The serving of the abovementioned Urgent Works Notice be delegated to the proper officer;
- (iv) Appointment of the required professional services to complete the urgent works in default be approved, with the appointment delegated to the proper officer upon expiry of a seven-day period from the serving of the Urgent Works Notice and following no clear commitment to the works being undertaken voluntarily being provided;
- (v) Acceptance of the grant offer from Historic England to underwrite 80% of the costs for the completion of the urgent works be approved.

408. **Off Street Parking Places Order**

A variation to the council's Off Street Parking Places Order 2014 was considered following implementation of the Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions (Approved Devices, Charging Guidelines and General Provisions) (England) Regulations 2022. This was be an administrative matter and presented no change to the customer. It was moved by Councillor Bray, seconded by Councillor Nichols and

RESOLVED –

- (i) The proposed variation to the Off Street Parking Places Order be approved;
- (ii) Implementation of the variation and authority to make any necessary additional adjustments to the wording of the variation order be delegated to the Director (Environment & Planning) and the Director (Corporate Services) in consultation with the Executive member for car parks.

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

- (a) Motion from Councillor P Williams, seconded by Councillor Webber-Jones

“This Council notes that the UK is the only country in Europe to still use the first past the post (FPTP) system for general elections aside from Belarus.

Created in the 1800s when the electoral choice was between the aristocratic Tories and Whigs and women were denied the right to vote, FPTP is structurally undemocratic. It means millions of votes do not matter, millions of votes are wasted, both “safe seats” and tactical voting are commonplace, and seats won in Westminster often bear little relationship to votes cast. In short, it is an archaic rigged system. How can Britain of the 2020s move forward when, in some constituencies, the same party has won every election since those constituencies were created in 1832?

There is an alternative voting system. It is called proportional representation (PR). More than 80 nations around the world already elect their legislatures this way, including in Scotland, in Wales and in the Republic of Ireland. Why? Because it is far fairer and proportional.

Council therefore resolves to write to Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to call for an end to first past the post, to end minority rule, and we support the introduction of a form of proportional representation for parliamentary general elections in which all votes count equally and seats match votes.”

Discussion ensued on whether different voting systems led to more stable governments and on fairness for the voter.

It was moved by Councillor P Williams, seconded by Councillor Webber-Jones and

RESOLVED – Council writes to Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, to call for an end to first past the post, to end minority rule and to support the introduction of a form of proportional representation for parliamentary general elections in which all votes count equally and seats match votes.

(b) Motion from Councillor Pendlebury, seconded by Councillor Sheppard-Bools

“Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council notes that March is Cerebral Palsy awareness month.

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council notes that tens of thousands of people living with Cerebral Palsy across England, including in this borough, do not enjoy a common standard of access to services because of a postcode lottery.

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council notes that access to vital support services for children living with Cerebral Palsy and their families is imperative to transforming their life chances.

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council notes the recommendations of the Commons Education Select Committee’s report on SEND for including Cerebral Palsy specifically within that framework and commits to working with relevant bodies, including Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission to further this aim in this local authority.

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council calls on the Department for Health and Social Care, Department for Education and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities to make funding available to Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council for the upskilling of both the clinical and educational workforce in the needs of those living with Cerebral Palsy.

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council notes the role of third sector and independent providers in delivering support to Cerebral Palsy services and resolves to do everything in its power to support them by:

1. Promoting the work of Action Cerebral Palsy and third sector and independent providers delivering Cerebral Palsy support services for Hinckley & Bosworth on the council’s website and social media.
2. Promoting the work of Action Cerebral Palsy and third sector and independent providers delivering Cerebral Palsy support services in Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council’s publications.
3. Committing to offer Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council’s employees training on Cerebral Palsy awareness from Action Cerebral Palsy.
4. Encouraging health and education workers in the Hinckley & Bosworth area to take up training in this area offered by Action Cerebral Palsy.
5. Writing to the MPs for the borough area asking them to raise the issue of provision of support services for children living with Cerebral Palsy and to meet with Action Cerebral Palsy.”

During discussion, the cost of training employees as a result of this motion was questioned. The difference in healthcare levels across the country was also raised.

It was moved by Councillor Pendlebury, seconded by Councillor Sheppard-Bools and unanimously

RESOLVED –

- (i) Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council calls on the Department for Health and Social Care, Department for Education and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities to make funding available to Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council for the upskilling of both the clinical and educational workforce in the needs of those living with Cerebral Palsy;
- (ii) Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council notes the role of third sector and independent providers in delivering support to Cerebral Palsy services and resolves to do everything in its power to support them by:
 - a. Promoting the work of Action Cerebral Palsy and third sector and independent providers delivering Cerebral Palsy support services for Hinckley & Bosworth on the council's website and social media
 - b. Promoting the work of Action Cerebral Palsy and third sector and independent providers delivering Cerebral Palsy support services in Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council's publications
 - c. Committing to offer Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council's employees training on Cerebral Palsy awareness from Action Cerebral Palsy
 - d. Encouraging health and education workers in the Hinckley & Bosworth area to take up training in this area offered by Action Cerebral Palsy
 - e. Writing to the MPs for the borough area asking them to raise the issue of provision of support services for children living with Cerebral Palsy and to meet with Action Cerebral Palsy.

- (c) Motion from Councillor M Mullaney, seconded by Councillor Sheppard-Bools

This motion was withdrawn before the meeting.

(The Meeting closed at 7.53 pm)

MAYOR