

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

3 September 2024 AT 6.30 pm

PRESENT: CLLR REH FLEMMING – DEPUTY MAYOR IN THE CHAIR

Cllr CM Allen, Cllr RG Allen, Cllr MC Bools, Cllr SL Bray,
Cllr MB Cartwright, Cllr MA Cook, Cllr DS Cope, Cllr MJ Crooks,
Cllr WJ Crooks, Cllr C Gibbens, Cllr SM Gibbens,
Cllr DT Glenville, Cllr CE Green, Cllr C Harris, Cllr L Hodgkins,
Cllr E Hollick, Cllr C Lambert, Cllr KWP Lynch, Cllr J Moore,
Cllr LJ Mullaney, Cllr MT Mullaney, Cllr A Pendlebury,
Cllr M Simmons, Cllr H Smith, Cllr P Stead-Davis,
Cllr MJ Surtees, Cllr BE Sutton, Cllr BR Walker, Cllr A Weightman
and Cllr P Williams

Officers in attendance: Bill Cullen, Julie Kenny, Rebecca Owen, Madeline Shellard and Sharon Stacey

137. Deputy Mayor in the chair

In the Mayor's absence, the Deputy Mayor took the chair for the meeting.

138. Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors O'Shea and Webber-Jones.

139. Minutes of the previous meeting

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

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July be confirmed as a correct record.

140. Declarations of interest

Councillors Cook, Cope, J Crooks, W Crooks, Flemming, Glenville, Green, Hodgkins, Hollick, Lynch, L Mullaney, Stead-Davis, Surtees, Sutton, Walker and Williams declared a pecuniary interest in motion b (winter fuel payments). The Monitoring Officer had granted a dispensation to enable them to take part in the debate and voting thereon, given the matter did not affect them any more than a member of the public and they were not the decision makers on the changes to winter fuel payments.

141. Mayor's Communications

In his absence, the Mayor had submitted his communications in written form.

The Deputy Mayor presented long service awards to Claire Copeland and Helen Tong who had each served the borough as an officer of the council for 25 years.

142. Leader of the Council's Position Statement

In his position statement, the Leader referred to the forthcoming peer review, summer events, government plans for housing growth, Cineworld and interest from other operators, sink holes and highway flooding, Making a Difference awards, a recruitment and employment event, heritage open days, the considerate parking campaign and the intention to grant Freedom of the Borough to a local physician.

143. Minutes of the Scrutiny Commission

The chair of the Scrutiny Commission presented the minutes of the last meeting for information.

144. Housing revenue account investment strategy

Consideration was given to the housing revenue account (HRA) investment strategy 2024 to 2028. Members emphasised the importance of building and acquiring new council housing. It was moved by Councillor M Mullaney, seconded by Councillor Bray and unanimously

RESOLVED –

- (i) The housing revenue account investment priorities and underpinning HRA financial assumptions be noted;
- (ii) The HRA investment strategy 2024 to 2028 be approved.

145. Calendar of meetings 2024/25 and 2025/26

Council received the draft calendar of meetings for the final part of 2024/25 and for 2025/26. It was moved by Councillor Bray, seconded by Councillor Bools and

RESOLVED – the calendar of meetings be approved.

146. Changes to membership of council bodies

It was noted that the Chief Executive had authorised the following in-year changes to membership of council bodies:

- Councillor Bray to replace Councillor Hollick on Ethical Governance & Personnel Committee
- Councillor Cope to replace Councillor Weightman on Planning Committee.

147. Motions received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 17

- (a) Motion from Councillor Pendlebury, seconded by Councillor Cartwright

Notice had been given of the following motion proposed by Councillor Pendlebury and seconded by Councillor Cartwright:

“The Borough Council notes:

- Reports from across the UK and in particular from local residents that Royal Mail is failing to deliver vital post, in a timely manner. Examples include missed medical appointments, late fines and important items from banks, solicitors as well as important personal letters and cards from family and friends
- Many people still rely on mail deliveries and do not have access to email and other forms of communication
- The hard work and long hours being undertaken by postal staff in an effort to deliver mail.

The Council further notes with concern:

- The recent increases in prices of postage rates – the fourth increase in two years
- Proposals being floated to reduce the frequency of postal deliveries.

Council resolves:

1. To express thanks to our hard-working postal staff for their continued efforts
2. To invite local Royal Mail managers to attend a meeting of the Council's Scrutiny Commission to hear concerns from members about postal deliveries in their area
3. To request the Chief Executive writes to the Chief Executive of Royal Mail to express the Council's concerns about Royal Mail deliveries across the borough."

Upon being put to the vote, it was unanimously

RESOLVED –

- (i) Thanks be expressed to our hard working postal staff for their continued efforts;
 - (ii) Royal Mail managers be invited to attend a meeting of the council's Scrutiny Commission to hear concerns from members about postal deliveries in the area;
 - (iii) The Chief Executive be requested to write to the Chief Executive of Royal Mail to express the Council's concerns about Royal Mail deliveries across the borough.
- (b) Motion from Councillor M Mullaney, seconded by Councillor L Mullaney

At this juncture, Councillors Cook, Cope, J Crooks, W Crooks, Flemming, Glenville, Green, Hodgkins, Hollick, Lynch, L Mullaney, Stead-Davis, Surtees, Sutton, Walker and Williams repeated their declaration of interest.

Notice had been given of the following motion proposed by Councillor M Mullaney, seconded by Councillor L Mullaney:

“Council notes the recent announcement by the Labour government to end universal winter fuel payments and restrict eligibility to only those in receipt of pension credits and other benefits.

Though many agree that universal winter fuel payments are not necessary, Council is deeply concerned that many pensioners on lower and middle incomes will now not receive the payments. Across England and Wales the number of people eligible for winter fuel payments will fall by 10 million (from 11.4 million to only 1.5 million).

In Hinckley & Bosworth the number of pensioners affected by the change in eligibility criteria is 22,431. That means 92.5% of pensioners currently eligible for winter fuel payments will no longer be able to claim the payment from this winter onwards.

Council believes that the Labour government has set the threshold at which pensioners do not qualify for winter fuel payments too low. Only those receiving a pension of less than £218.15 a week (or £332.95 a week for couples) are eligible for pension credits. This is significantly lower than the living wage rate.

Council is also concerned by the low take up of pension credit, with only 63% of those eligible nationwide receiving it – and over £880,000 pensioners not doing so. Council recognises the role we have to play to increase awareness of benefits such as pension credit to ensure people are aware of the support they are entitled to.

Council further notes that the energy price cap is due to rise by 10% in October, which combined with the removal of winter fuel payments will push thousands of local pensioners into fuel poverty.

Council resolves to:

1. Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the policy on linking winter fuel payments to pension credit receipt to be immediately paused and introduce a new threshold to determine eligibility for winter fuel payments
2. Urgently commence a significant awareness campaign to maximise uptake of pension credits.”

During discussion, members asked that residents be signposted to venues designated as warm spaces under the warm spaces project.

Councillor Bray and six further members stood to request voting on the motion be recorded. The vote was taken as follows:

Councillors C Allen, R Allen, Bools, Bray, Cartwright, Cook, Cope, J Crooks, W Crooks, Flemming, C Gibbens, S Gibbens, Glenville, Green, Harris, Hodgkins, Hollick, Lambert, Lynch, Moore, L Mullaney, M Mullaney, Pendlebury, Simmons, Smith, Stead-Davis, Surtees, Sutton, Walker, Weightman and Williams voted FOR the motion (31);

There were no votes against the motion and no abstentions.

The motion was therefore declared CARRIED and it was

RESOLVED –

- (i) The Chief Executive be instructed to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the policy on linking winter fuel payments to pension credit receipt to be immediately paused and to introduce a new threshold to determine eligibility for winter fuel payments;
- (ii) A significant awareness campaign to maximise uptake of pension credits be urgently commenced.

(The Meeting closed at 7.40 pm)

MAYOR