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Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

Bill Cullen MBA (ISM), BA(Hons) MRTPI
Chief Executive

Date: 03 October 2023

To: All Members of Council

Dear Councillor,

Please see overleaf a supplementary agenda for the meeting of the **COUNCIL** on **TUESDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2023** at **6.30 pm**.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Owen'.

Rebecca Owen
Democratic Services Manager

COUNCIL - 3 OCTOBER 2023

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

6. QUESTIONS

To deal with questions under Council Procedure Rule number 14.

(a) **Question from Councillor Surtees to the Executive members for Planning and Finance**

“Members have been informed of overspends year to date in the planning department of circa £50,000 on agency staff, circa £50,000 on enforcement actions and circa £55,000 on appeals.

In addition, members are advised that year to date receipts in relation to planning applications are £50,000 under budget.

- (i) Will the Executive member for Planning please detail the actions taken so far, or planned for future implementation within timescales, to address these challenges in his department?
- (ii) Can the Executive member for Finance confirm the anticipated impact of these issues on the council’s finances and full year budget?”

Response from Cllr Crooks:

“Thank you Cllr Surtees for your question. I acknowledge the current projected overspend in the planning budget, including for agency staff and appeals. The proposed overspend on enforcement action is budgeted but will ultimately depend on what action the council takes this financial year as to whether this budgeted overspend is spent. In addition, planning fee income against the budget to date is down.

The Planning department has previously acknowledged the use of agency staff and high number of planning appeals in reports to the Scrutiny Commission and Finance & Performance Scrutiny in November 2022. The next annual update report will be taken to Finance & Performance Scrutiny on 23 October 2023. Nearly one year on from these scrutiny reports, the council remains reliant on agency staff to fill vacant posts, particularly at a senior level. However, this reliance on agency staff is significantly below budget compared to 2022/23 due to the Planning department being successful in filling permanent planning officer posts and with a recently filled permanent team leader post too. The Planning department is therefore in a significantly stronger budget position in relation to the use of agency staff compared to this time last year following the sudden and drastic loss of permanent staff in late 2021. This stability in resources is also demonstrated in the significant increase in performance of the Development Management team, with government targets consistently met since October 2022, a continuous 12 month period.

The Planning department continues to process a high number of planning appeals, including public hearings and inquiries. A report on planning appeals will be presented to the Scrutiny Commission on 18 December 2023. Whilst current

fee income is below budget, planning fees are difficult to budget for and are strongly impacted by large scale individual schemes such as solar farm applications and large reserved matters schemes.”

(b) **Question from Councillor Boothby to the Executive member for Planning**

“Council is aware that there are proposals as part of Padge Hall Farm development to close the A5 Watling Street over the Easter holiday weekend to facilitate the lowering of the road under the infamous railway bridge.

Will the member for Planning please confirm what actions this council has taken to ensure minimal disruption and disturbance to residents and motorists during these works?”

Response from Councillor Crooks:

“Thank you for your question, Cllr Boothby. The planning application at Padge Hall Farm, resolved to permit at Planning Committee in June 2023, is still pending completion of the S106 agreement as the application is across three local planning authorities (Rugby Borough Council (RBC), Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) and Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC)). As such, permission has not yet been granted at present.

The applicants for the scheme presented to members in May 2023 ahead of Planning Committee in June 2023 and set out a proposed timeframe of works including closure of the A5 during Easter weekend in March 2024 to allow for works to lower the height of the road below the railway bridge that crosses the A5 to take place. These works are considered to be a significant benefit of the proposal and of a significant economic benefit to the area to prevent the current frequent bridge strikes by HGVs. Once these works have been programmed in, the council will work with National Highways, RBC and NBBC to communicate any road closures and diversion routes. At present, as confirmed by the applicant presenting to members in May, current diversion routes resulting from bridge strikes do not route traffic off the A5 through Hinckley & Bosworth Borough”.

(c) **Question from Councillor R Allen to the Executive member for Parks, Open Spaces & Neighbourhood Services**

“Residents on Mountfield Road in Earl Shilton and Crossways in Burbage have seen their waste collection services downgraded and their garden waste service withdrawn altogether.

The common denominator is that both Crossways and Mountfield Road are unadopted roads.

Can the Executive member confirm if any other similarly unadopted roads in the borough will have their refuse collection services reviewed? If so, please confirm how many roads and residents may ultimately be affected?”

Response from Councillor Hodgkins:

“I would like to thank Councillor Allen for his question. As I am sure he will appreciate, unadopted roads are by their very nature not maintained or designed

to a standard whereby Leicestershire County Council maintains them as part of the publicly maintained highway network. They are often narrow, very poorly surfaced, and are “no through” roads with no safe turning place for refuse vehicles.

The requirement for residents to place their wheeled bins at the boundary with the adopted public highway has been in place since the Wheeled Bin and Container Policy was introduced in 2012. We have, however, not sought to retrospectively apply this but where complaints or concerns are made we will look to implement the policy at this point. We will always aim to maintain the current service but where there are health and safety concerns (as was the case at Crossways and Mountfield Road), we will have to introduce safer collection methods such as sacks or asking residents to place their bins at the boundary with the public highway. Local residents were consulted on their preference once the health and safety issues were confirmed.

There are currently two roads where we have similar health and safety concerns which are currently being assessed.

We are looking at options as part of our fleet renewal in terms of a smaller RCV to determine its suitability for these narrow and often unsurfaced roads. Such a vehicle is currently scheduled for demonstration to us later this year. Once fully evaluated this will be considered as part of the government’s proposed waste collection changes, and the fleet renewal in 2025.

We recognise that residents value their wheeled bin collections and this provides the preferred service for both residents and staff and will endeavour to find an affordable alternative but safe solution for these properties if at all possible.”

8. **LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S POSITION STATEMENT**

Welcome to this October meeting of Council.

Tonight we will be considering reports on three very positive matters. Firstly, our Young People’s Strategy 2023 – 2026 and the reviewing of key achievements arising from the work on delivering the former strategy for 2019 to 2022. Secondly, the report on our success in securing Centre for Warmth funding linked to our great partnership work with Cadent Gas. Thirdly, we will consider the Developing Communities Fund project which targets key improvements in the centre of Market Bosworth.

I have set out the following key updates below:

COMPLIMENTS FOR HBBC SERVICES

I have received an incredibly complimentary letter from a resident of the borough who was formerly a longstanding councillor and elected Mayor during the 1990s in Northamptonshire. He expressed his sincere gratitude to the whole council for the way it delivers its services. He drew particular attention to the quality of maintenance of our parks, citing Hollycroft and Clarendon. He was very complimentary about our refuse collectors, highlighting that “they always seem cheerful, whatever the weather and often go the extra mile to keep their rounds

tidy". Finally, he said our "town centre is a delight" and particularly highlighted the range of free events that we put on for residents, the cleanliness of the town and the way we use Argents Mead.

I am sure we all share many of these sentiments which are a credit to our staff and the work members do to support them.

MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING

I would like to thank members and officer colleagues for supporting the Macmillan coffee morning fund raising last week. This was a great event and we had some fantastic cakes baked, and I might say worthy of the Great British Bake Off. Donations have run into hundreds of pounds.

HONORARY ALDERMAN APPOINTMENT

I wanted to thank those members who attended our Extraordinary meeting of Council on 12 September to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on David Bill MBE in recognition of his incredible services to the borough over his fifty years' service as a local councillor serving the people of the borough. We heard some great and well deserved tributes from across the floor.

This is the first honorary title to be bestowed on a former councillor by the borough council and we will be providing a dedicated seat in the chamber for our Honorary Alderman to attend in an observing capacity.

BURBAGE COMMON

I am pleased to report that thousands of visitors enjoyed a fun packed Burbage Common open day event on Saturday, 16 September. This open day is always a great day out for the whole family, with something for everyone. The area around the visitor centre at the Leicester Road entrance was transformed with a marquee accommodating craft and charity stalls and local and national environmental charities.

I and my colleagues thoroughly enjoyed our time at the event. The free event makes the most of the natural environment and it was great to see the workshops, demonstrations, animals, have-a-go archer, bat box making, countryside crafts, dog shows and lots more.

I would like to thank officers and everyone involved in making this event so successful and look forward to seeing you at next year's event.

UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY CELEBRATION EVENT

Earlier in September the council supported an event at the Meeting Centre in Hinckley's Marchant Road to celebrate Ukrainian Independence Day. Around 170 people attended including local community leaders, Ukrainian refugees, hosts and their families.

I was delighted to attend with the Mayor and my Executive lead for Housing and

Community Safety. I can advise that since the Russian invasion of Ukraine began, more than 100 generous host families have opened their homes to Ukrainian guests, and we have welcomed more than 200 Ukrainians into the borough and the council has provided more than 35 Ukrainian households with secure accommodation.

Thanks to my member colleagues and officers for supporting this event.

LAUNCH OF OUR ANNUAL MAKING A DIFFERENCE AWARDS FOR 2023

To remind all members that the hunt is on to find Hinckley and Bosworth residents who make a difference to the lives of others through volunteering. I urge you and our residents to nominate a person or group that deserves recognition for the help they give to others.

Nominations must be received by Friday, 20 October and details can be found on our website.

BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES

I'm pleased to report that the council, in partnership with all districts in Leicestershire, has funded a new business support programme – the Leicestershire Business Advice Service.

Businesses of all sizes in our borough will now be able to benefit from the help and expertise this service will offer, including start-up workshops, accelerator programmes and one to one advice to help businesses at all stages of their journey.

This locally based business support service will give people the information skills and connections to start up, protect and grow their business. I would urge companies to get in touch and make the most of this free and impartial advice. Details can be found on our website.

EVENTS PROGRAMME

Following our successful events programme over the summer that saw thousands of people attend family events in our parks and town centre, our autumn programme commences with our Spooktacular Saturday. The event is returning to Hinckley on 28 October from 10am to 3pm, to take place in Hinckley's Britannia shopping centre and promises to be fun for the entire family. Our annual Christmas lights switch on in Hinckley will be on Friday, 17 November and we will publish our parish switch on dates once these are all confirmed.

HERITAGE SIGNS

I am pleased to confirm that the council has arranged the installation of a series of heritage signs to signpost Hinckley's historic town jitties. These are being funded via the High Street Heritage Action Zone and the Environmental Improvement Programme. The signs will make the historic jitties and yards dotted throughout Hinckley town centre and around Castle Street visible to both residents and

shoppers.

We hope that the signs will enable people to explore more of Hinckley's historic yards and jitties, as well as the many independent businesses and shops situation close to them.

CHURCH WALK PUBLIC REALM

I can confirm that a contractor has now been appointed to undertake improvements to Church Walk and Lilley's Yard off Castle Street in Hinckley as part of the Hinckley Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) programme. The programme for the start of works is being finalised, with all works scheduled for completion by March 2024.

Works are also well underway on our HAZ building improvement scheme for the town centre targeting properties for grants for works to repair and restore significant historical features including shop fronts.

CHRISTMAS CAR PARKING

I can announce that we will again provide free car parking in the town centres during the Christmas shopping period. Details will be published shortly.

DROP-IN SESSION FOR NEW DIAGNOSTIC CENTRE FOR HINCKLEY AND DISTRICT

Our NHS partners are convening a drop-in session on 11 October at 2pm to 7pm at the Green Rooms on St Mary's Road, Hinckley. This follows the award of £24.6m to support the development of the community diagnostic centre on the site of Hinckley Community Hospital on Mount Road.

I would encourage as many residents as possible and members to attend and feedback on the plans.

FREE TREE SCHEME

In line with our net zero and environmental ambitions, I am delighted to confirm we are poised to launch our free tree scheme for 2023. This year the scheme will provide 3,000 individual trees and five kilometres (three miles) of hedging.

Residents can start to order their trees from Monday, 9 October and the collection day will be at the end of November to coincide with National Tree Week. If all trees grow to maturity they will absorb over 10,000 tonnes of carbon over the next 40 years as well as providing important habitats for wildlife and importantly provide shading and cooling to help adapt to higher summer temperatures.

I would like to express my thanks to Hinckley & Rugby Building Society and the National Forest Company for their sponsorship.

NATIONAL RAIL FREIGHT SCHEME

As members will be aware, an application has been submitted by Tritax Symmetry for development consent for the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange just off the M69 junction 2, close to Burbage Common. This is now being considered via a public inquiry which has been opened by government.

The council has prepared its representations and signalled to the inspector that we will present our evidence on behalf of residents of the borough, spelling out our significant concerns over the potential impacts arising from this major scheme. Our member working group will be considering our proposed submissions to the inquiry this week.

HINCKLEY BID VOTE

Voting will commence later this month for a new five-year terms for the Hinckley BID. As many of you will know, the BID has been in operation for 15 years, supporting businesses and working in partnership with the council in putting on events for shoppers and visitors. The BID will require over 50% of all 400+ businesses in the Hinckley BID area to vote to support it to enable it to progress to a fourth term.