

Public Document Pack



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

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

Date: 13 December 2022

To: All Members of Council

Dear Councillor,

Please see overleaf a supplementary agenda for the meeting of the **COUNCIL** on **TUESDAY, 13 DECEMBER 2022 at 6.30 pm.**

Yours sincerely

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

Rebecca Owen
Democratic Services Manager

COUNCIL - 13 DECEMBER 2022

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

6. QUESTIONS

To deal with questions under Council Procedure Rule number 14.

(a) Question from Councillor R Allen to the Leader

“Will the Leader please provide an update on works to remedy the flooding issues at the Ashby Road Cemetery?”

Response from the Executive member for Streetscene Services:

“The new drainage was installed in the cemetery extension by the contractor in October 2021.

An additional gully was installed in autumn 2022 adjacent to the hardstanding to capture surface water from the road way during heavy rain.

Additional sand slitting is currently underway between the existing graves and this should be complete by the end of December 2022.

Officers will continue to monitor the cemetery extension for surface water issues and if necessary consider further works. At present all the drainage is currently working well and dealt with the very increased rainfall of the last month as expected.”

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

“Can the Executive member for Planning please provide an update on the status of plans to redevelop the former leisure centre site please?”

Response from the Executive member for Planning:

“I thank Councillor Allen for his question.

I am pleased to confirm that progress on the former leisure centre site at Trinity Vicarage Road has been made.

To implement the planning consent the developers, Green 4 Developments Ltd, started commencement of works on the site back in October this year. These construction works took place on the Marchant Road side of the site and consisted of highway works. Due to the method of construction they are intending to use for the properties they are currently testing the materials on another site which should be complete in April 2023. The permission granted is for the erection of 66 apartments within two apartment blocks together with the erection of seven houses together with access, open space and associated infrastructure.”

8. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S POSITION STATEMENT

Welcome to our December Council and our last before the Christmas break. May I take this opportunity to wish you all a safe and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

On tonight's agenda we will debate three key reports that cover our Local Development Scheme and timetable for the new local plan, our new Acquisition and Development Strategy and an independent report on allowances.

I have the following brief updates.

Free tree scheme

The United Nations held a major biodiversity conference last week and in recognition of the importance of this, I wanted to highlight the great work our Green Spaces team have been undertaking on our own key initiative to improve the biodiversity of the borough. This autumn we ran our first residents free tree scheme. Over 23,000 trees were given to residents, businesses, parish councils and community groups to plant on their land. Over 4,000 trees were also planted on HBBC land as part of this initiative. The scheme will help increase tree canopy cover across the borough, improve biodiversity and, if all trees reach maturity, over 10,000 tonnes of carbon will be absorbed over the next 40 years.

I would like to express my thanks to all residents who have taken part in this initiative and to Hinckley & Rugby Building Society, Pexa and the National Forest Company for their financial support, and to the Green Spaces team for their great work in delivering the scheme. I hope to run this scheme again with the sponsorship of local businesses.

Cost of living support

The council continues to support its residents with the cost of living crisis. Our welfare officer provides one to one support to people facing difficulties. She has received 893 referrals in the past year, with 99 in the last month. In addition, we continue to provide housing advice and support and work with our partners in the voluntary and community sector to deliver our warm spaces programme across the borough. This has involved stakeholders with public buildings and spaces across the area opening their doors to people who are struggling to heat their homes as the cost of living crisis bites and as temperatures fall. We have publicised a full list of warm spaces on the council's website. Our teams are also supporting the distribution of cost of living payments, having to work extremely hard to respond to the national initiatives that are being launched.

UKSPF

I'm pleased to confirm the council has now received confirmation of acceptance of our investment plan for the delivery of the £2.6m allocation for spend over the next two and a quarter years. The first year's allocation of just over £300,000 grant is now signed off with government and future years' grant awards will be subject to submission of relevant documentation. Officers are working to finalise delivery plans linked to this year's allocation which we are required to spend by the end of March 2023. As members will be aware, we were expecting confirmation of our investment plans that were submitted in July to be signed off by October. The confirmation of the grant award, whilst positive, provides a challenge over delivery in the next three months.

Christmas events

It has been an extremely busy time for the council's events team. They have helped put on a great programme of events leading up to Christmas. The Hinckley Christmas lights switch-on attracted over 14,000 people and the Market Bosworth event attracted over 3,000. Our annual Christmas Santa family fun run attracted 250 well-dressed Santas who ran a circuit of the town centre. Last week the annual car trail saw over 150 residents from care homes in the borough visit Hinckley to see the festive lights. The Christmas "Festive Feast" that took place last weekend was host to 45 traders attracting hundreds of people despite the cold weather.

Our events team is now planning a family fun filled event programme for 2023.

External Audit

As members of our Audit Committee will be aware, we continue to experience delays in receiving our annual audit opinion. To put this in context, Public Sector Auditor Appointments (PSAA), the organisation which 99% of local authorities in the country engage to procure external auditors, confirm that of 467 councils who opted in, only 56 have received their opinions as of November this year. The PSAA has said that what makes the position 'increasingly alarming' is the fact that more than 220 opinions from prior years remain outstanding. It states that the scale of the backlog is such that it is beginning to seriously undermine the financial management, governance and accountability of local government bodies. This is all in the context of external audit fees increasing by 150%. It is clear the system is broken and needs fundamental reform. I have therefore asked the Chief Executive to raise this matter via the District Councils Network to the Local Government Association.

Electric vehicle charging

On a more positive note, I'm pleased to report that our new EV charge points should go live on our car parks at Hallfields, Earl Shilton (four points) and Rectory Lane, Market Bosworth (three points) this month. I would like to express my thanks to Market Bosworth Parish Council for its contribution to the scheme. The Stanley Street scheme in Barwell (four points) will be live by February, as this has been delayed by highway and power connection issues. Once all of these charge points are operational, we will have provided 23 charge points allowing 44 vehicles to charge at any one time on our car parks.

HSBC bank

As you may have heard, the high street bank HSBC has announced it is closing 114 of its branches next year. I am extremely disappointed to hear that HSBC has decided to close its Market Bosworth branch in 2023, the one remaining bank in the town, as this will be the loss of yet another high street bank and, of course, local employment.

It will undoubtedly have a detrimental impact on the residents and businesses of Market Bosworth and surrounding villages who currently bank with them, as they

will need to travel further afield to Hinckley if they wish to see someone in a branch. We are currently making contact with the bank to enquire if they will work with us to discuss providing alternative banking arrangements in the market town to help residents and local businesses, as we did with Barclays in Hinckley.

12. SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2022/23 AND 2023/24

To present the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

A paragraph containing a recommendation was omitted from the report and should be included as paragraph 3.9:

3.9 Council is also asked to amend paragraph 6.6 of the scheme of allowances to read:

“The special responsibility allowances shall be increased annually in line with officer pay awards unless a resolution of Council determines otherwise. Where the pay award is a fixed sum, it will be calculated on the percentage equivalent of the value of the pay award on the average salary of all heads of service and senior management.”

13. MOTIONS RECEIVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 17

The motion from Councillor R Allen, seconded by Councillor C Allen, has been withdrawn.

This page is intentionally left blank