

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

3 October 2023 AT 6.30 pm

PRESENT: CLLR SM GIBBENS - MAYOR
CLLR R WEBBER-JONES – DEPUTY MAYOR

Cllr CM Allen, Cllr RG Allen, Cllr MC Bools, Cllr SL Bray,
Cllr MA Cook, Cllr DS Cope, Cllr MJ Crooks, Cllr WJ Crooks,
Cllr REH Flemming, Cllr C Gibbens, Cllr CE Green, Cllr C Harris,
Cllr L Hodgkins, Cllr E Hollick, Cllr C Lambert, Cllr KWP Lynch,
Cllr LJ Mullaney, Cllr MT Mullaney, Cllr LJP O'Shea,
Cllr A Pendlebury, Cllr P Stead-Davis, Cllr MJ Surtees,
Cllr BE Sutton, Cllr A Weightman and Cllr P Williams

Also in attendance: Cllr MB Cartwright via Teams

Officers in attendance: Rachel Burgess, Bill Cullen, Simon D Jones, Julie Kenny and Rebecca Owen

140. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Boothby, Glenville, Moore, Smith and Walker.

141. **Minutes of the previous meetings**

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

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meetings held on 18 July and 12 September 2023 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

142. **Declarations of interest**

No interests were declared.

143. **Mayor's Communications**

The Mayor spoke about recent events that he and the Deputy Mayor had attended.

144. **Questions**

(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

In the absence of the questioner, the question was not put, however reference was made to the written response in the supplementary agenda.

- (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."

By way of supplementary question, Councillor Allen asked when residents and members would be notified about the two other roads mentioned, and whether a short term solution for garden waste collections was being considered as this had been withdrawn from the roads mentioned. In response, it was explained that consultation was currently underway in relation to the two other roads and residents would be notified when complete. It was also reiterated that alternative vehicles were being explored which would be smaller and able to access the unadopted roads in question.

145. **Leader of the Council's Position Statement**

In presenting his position statement, the leader referred to:

- Compliments for HBBC services from a resident who had previously been a councillor in another area
- The MacMillan coffee morning which raised over £632
- The appointment of David Bill MBE as Honorary Alderman at the previous Council meeting
- The success of Burbage Common open day
- The Ukrainian community celebration event
- The Making a Difference Awards which were now open for nominations
- The creation of Leicestershire Business Advice Service
- The successful summer events programme
- Installation of heritage signs for Hinckley's historic jitties
- Public realm works at Church Walk, Hinckley
- Christmas car parking
- A drop-in session to view the plans for the new NHS diagnostic centre
- The free tree scheme which would be launching soon
- Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange
- Voting for Hinckley BID which would commence later in October.

146. **Minutes of the Scrutiny Commission**

Councillor Lambert introduced the minutes of the Scrutiny Commission meeting held on 31 August.

147. **Young People's Strategy 2023-2026**

Consideration was given to the Young People's Strategy 2023 – 2026 and achievements of the previous strategy. Members emphasised the importance of services for young people and thanked officers involved. It was moved by Councillor M Mullaney, seconded by Councillor Bools and

RESOLVED – The Young People's Strategy 2023 – 2026 be approved.

148. **Centres for warmth external funding**

Members received a report which sought support for a supplementary income and expenditure budget to support delivery of a project aimed at providing centres for warmth. Members commended Cadent Gas and the council for the support provided to residents. It was moved by Councillor M Mullaney, seconded by Councillor Bray and

RESOLVED – A supplementary income and expenditure budget for the value of the external funding of £228,446.07 be approved.

149. **Developing Communities Fund - Market Bosworth**

Approval was sought to allocate the balance of the Developing Communities Fund (DCF) to a project in Market Bosworth which would improve road safety and car parking, enhance tourism opportunities and support local businesses. The importance of maintaining the vibrancy of Market Bosworth was highlighted and officers were thanked for their work on the project. It was moved by Councillor Bools, seconded by Councillor Bray and

RESOLVED – The use of the DCF reserve of £120,000 to allocate to the Market Bosworth road improvement scheme be approved, along with creation of related expenditure budgets.

(The Meeting closed at 7.08 pm)

MAYOR