

Council 21st February 2022

Item 6 refers

Questions submitted by Members

6.a QUESTION TO THE LEADER

Submitted by Councillor James

Question:

Energy Crisis Action Required

The UK Energy Supply has structural issues, the present structure is not working for either suppliers or their customers. Families are facing financial hardship to meet the cost of energy bills. With the present structural arrangements and cost increases things can only get worse.

Will the Leader tell us if he supports the Local Energy Bill together with the other measures listed below? The Bill seeks to reduce operating costs. It is making its way through Parliament right now and is already backed by many Local Authorities and has cross-party support from Members of Parliament and together with this Bill will the Leader support additional actions that Government could take to help customers even more namely:

To remove VAT and Environmental Taxes from Energy Bills and allocate to general taxation spreading the cost over several years. This could save an additional £250 per annum for the average customer. In this way it is hoped that rises due in April of this year with more rises to come, will be much smaller and in future years as the wholesale prices of energy fall will buy time to eventually recover costs.

6.b QUESTION TO THE LEADER

Submitted by Councillor Sarfas

Question:

Residents are aware of proposals to allocate up to £1 m in funds to Lutterworth Sports Centre. This to be spent on improvements upgrades etc . Assuming that full details of the upgrade proposals will be made public. Will the Leader confirm for the record that HDC will actively encourage consultation with/input from residents on the proposals ?

6.c QUESTION TO THE LEADER

Submitted by Councillor Beadle

Question:

On 2nd February 2022, Rupert Matthews, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, cut police numbers by 100 officers by abandoning the fully costed proposals of the previous PCC, Lord Willy Bach. These fully costed proposals were to increase police numbers to 2,242 by April this year, with a further increase planned for 2023 which would have raised the total to 2,342 and would have restored local police strength to pre-austerity levels. Willy Bach's final budget was approved on 29th January 2021 and all political parties represented on the Police and Crime Panel backed his approach. The proposal subsequently received a clean bill of health from the Conservative Police Minister, Kit Malthouse.

In his first budget, Mr Matthews increased the band D Council Tax by £10 - the maximum allowed by central government. However, rather than allocating the cash to additional police resources, he has discarded the plan to increase police numbers and has instead decided to transfer the income to reserves - a move that conflicts with established Treasury advise.

What representations has the Leader or relevant portfolio holder made (or propose to make) to Mr Matthews, to convey the message that this is a retrograde step that is in direct conflict with the interests and concerns of Harborough residents ?