

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL

Held at The Council Chamber, The Symington Building,  
Adam & Eve Street, Market Harborough, LE16 7AG

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021

commencing at 6.30 p.m.

Present:

Councillor Bilbie (Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs Ackerley, Bannister, Bateman, Dr Bremner, Burrell, Champion, Critchley, Dann, Dunton, Elliott, Fosker (from 7.42pm), Frenchman, Galton, Golding, Graves, Hallam, Hollick, James, Johnson, King, Knowles, Mahal, Mrs Page, Rickman, Mrs Robinson, Sarfas, Mrs Simpson and Whelband

Officers present: S. Green, S. Hamilton, N. Proudfoot and V. Wenham

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Bilbie proposed a change to the order in which the three Motions be considered and Councillors voted in favour of Motion three, being considered as the first Motion.

A list of events attended by the Chairman from June to September had been tabled, and Councillor Bilbie highlighted the recent visit by Their Royal Highnesses, the Earl and Countess of Wessex, and also the significant achievement by Market Harborough in Bloom winning gold for the tenth consecutive year.

DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors Ackerley and Mrs Robinson declared an interest in Item 7a (i) Recommendation from the Cabinet: Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan as they are both Lutterworth Town Councillors, however this would not preclude both Councillors taking part in the discussion.

MINUTES

Councillor Johnson requested that a reply to her question to Councillor Bateman regarding the Open Spaces Strategy 2021, in relation to the Green Flag criteria, the costs involved and why the toilets were closed on a Bank Holiday be provided.

It was moved by Councillor King, seconded by Councillor Hallam and

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021 be received and adopted.

REPORT OF THE LEADER

Councillor King, Leader, preceded the presentation of his report with the following points :-

- The fantastic honour for Market Harborough to receive a visit by Their Royal Highnesses, the Earl and Countess of Wessex.

- Thanks to everyone involved in organising the Voluntary and Community Fair on The Square in Market Harborough.
- In reviewing the District's Local Plan, it has been noted that the Harborough District has delivered more affordable housing in the last five years than Leicester City, and has the second highest rate within Leicester and Leicestershire. 207 homes were delivered last year.
- £1.3 million of Community contributions via Section 106 grants has been given to various groups across the District in the last few months.
- During the week of the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021, the first Crisis Café took place, which will occur every Wednesday going forwards from 12.00pm to 8.00pm on the ground floor of the Council building.
- On the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021, 10.30 to 4.00pm, the first ever Vegan Market within the Harborough District will take place on The Square in Market Harborough.
- The significant achievement of Harborough in Bloom winning gold for the tenth year, and also Lutterworth in Bloom winning silver.
- A very successful "Chair decorating" event recently took place in St. Mary's Place.
- Shock was expressed by the language used by the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party.

### **Economic Growth and Recovery**

Since we last met in late June there has been a great deal of activity by the Council in developing and rolling out funding to support our local economy and help it recover from the impact of the various shutdowns and restrictions brought about by the pandemic.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> September, I was delighted to attend the delayed Leicestershire Live Business Awards 2020/21 at the Maher Centre in Leicester, along with the HDC Chairman, Cllr Bilbie, and members of the Economic Development team to witness one of our local SMEs, Armourgeddon, near Husbands Bosworth, be awarded the AXA Health Family Business of the Year award. A superb achievement and one which they can be immensely proud of, as we all should be. A number of other local businesses were shortlisted finalists in other categories.

It is testament to the resilience of our local business community that the number of jobs available in the local economy is around 3,200, although the number of people on furlough in July was 2,400; however in the most recent (August) data release, the out-of-work claimant count had fallen to 1,355, so there is still some way to go until we are back to where we were pre-March 2020. On top of this, we have seen significant investment and jobs growth over the summer. With the finalisation of Poundland into the HDC owned shop unit at the Commons car park, to the major investment by four international logistics companies at Magna Park, creating 1,600 new jobs, there have been a stream of announcements and commitments made locally to invest and boost employment opportunities.

As was reported at Cabinet on 6<sup>th</sup> September, HDC has handed out over £5.1million in approximately 1,500 grants to local businesses via the various schemes permitted by government, and over the summer we launched our latest recovery funds via the £900k Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG). Our intention is for this funding to act as a catalyst to boost recovery, growth, and innovation for local businesses with or without commercial premises, through the four new schemes. ARG will continue to support businesses that are severely impacted by the extended restrictions, (including businesses listed in the Government guidance), businesses that have not received any Covid-19 grants, and businesses that remain closed, although the hope is that the main emphasis will be to encourage businesses to look to the future and 'build back better', in an innovative, greener, and more digitally connected manner. Feedback is encouraging; businesses have embraced this in the spirit it was intended and the ARG process is now leveraging additional business investment to match the grants awarded.

In addition to that, we have at short notice developed a scheme to support retraining of individuals to become HGV/LGV drivers to help address the long-term shortfall in such drivers, especially important given the significance of the logistics sector within the Harborough local economy. Already several people have been supported in this way.

Part of this recovery plan over the summer has included a series of events based around Market Harborough and, to a lesser extent, Lutterworth to help bring shopper and visitors back into our town centres.

These have included on 8<sup>th</sup> September, the official visit of their Royal Highnesses the Earl and Countess of Wessex to start the celebration of the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tuesday Market Charter, now the successful Market Harborough Indoor Market in St Mary's Place. This was a fantastic informal visit, enabling the Royal couple to pay thanks to many of our market traders who have been crucial in helping support our local communities during the pandemic. This was hugely enjoyed by all those who were present and coincided with the launch of the People's Gallery exhibition of old photos through the ages in the Market Hall and St Mary's Place, as well as the historic Market Trail around the town centre. They also visited The Symington Building and the Harborough Museum and an official plaque to commemorate their visit was unveiled and will be permanently installed at the Market Hall in due course.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to pay sincere thanks to our Market and Events Manager, Sairah Butt who is leaving the Council after 7 years to pursue other opportunities. On your behalf, I wish her every success.

### **Greener and Cleaner**

Having made significant progress over the years in reducing the usage of CO2 by the Council itself, and across the wider district, Harborough District Council will shortly embark on another step to reducing greenhouse gases via the collective buying power used in energy auctions, to embrace the opportunity for buying solar power installations via the ichooser auction process.

In July, we announced that some of the least energy-efficient homes in the Harborough district are set to benefit from a new initiative after funding was secured.

Harborough District Council has identified around 70 properties in Harborough district that can be retrofitted, as part of a Green Homes Grant, to be much more energy efficient, and will be working with the Platform Housing Group, after receiving Local Authority Delivery (LAD) scheme from the Government totalling nearly £480,000. Harborough district has many older less efficient homes that can be cold and costly to heat. This is particularly the case in villages where there is no connection to gas. As well as solar panels for hot water, homes will be insulated, and windows and doors upgraded if necessary. Houses are set to benefit in Lubenham, Walcote, Walton by Kimcote, Swinford, Husbands Bosworth, Market Harborough, Tilton on the Hill and Great Easton.

On September 15<sup>th</sup>, yet another eco-criminal discovered that fly-tipping rubbish in the Harborough district doesn't pay, when they were fined by Leicester Magistrates around £4,500 (which included costs) as a result of the ongoing work by our award-winning environmental services team. Our 'Tip-Off' campaign has resulted in a significant reduction in fly-tipping in the district over the past two-years, bucking the national trend. The commitment that our team displays in tracking down such people is commendable – although it would be simpler and cheaper for all of us, if people didn't fly-tip in the first place.

Then there is Big Green Week which has just finished, hosted by HDC on The Square in Market Harborough. Loads of really interesting stands and voluntary groups showing how we can all make individual adjustments to what we do and how we do things in order to make our world cleaner and greener.

And there are many, many more initiatives that I could list here that Harborough DC is working away at with partners to improve our places.

### **Levelling Up and Local Government changes**

Finally, congratulations to Harborough MP Neil O'Brien on his appointment as the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the renamed Dept for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (LUHC), under the new Secretary of State, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP. As a member of the District Council's Network Executive Management Board and as a newly appointed member of the LGA Resources Board, I'm looking forward to continuing to press the case for fair funding for districts, giving us the powers to get

the job done and improve the access to infrastructure funding for rural areas like Harborough. In his 15<sup>th</sup> July speech about levelling up, the Prime Minister announced that they are looking at devo deals based on county areas, without requiring local government reorganisation as a pre-requisite. I can inform Council that discussions have taken place with other neighbouring councils about such matters, as well as Mr O'Brien before he became a junior minister. I've no doubt we shall hear more about such matters over the coming weeks and months.

#### Comments on the Leader's report

Councillor Knowles asked a number of questions as follows :-

1. What is the length of the Poundland lease ?
2. In relation to the creation of the 1,600 jobs, are these full-time, part-time or fixed term ?
3. With regards to the scheme supporting the re-training of individuals to become HGV/LGV drivers, can the Council receive any financial benefit if it contracts directly with one of the training provider to allow the Council to support more people ? Also how many people have been assisted ?
4. In relation to the 'Green and Cleaner' section of the report, would the Leader be supportive of Officers encouraging and supporting the installation of solar panels on new industrial, commercial and domestic properties ?
5. In reference to the section on 'Levelling Up and Local Government changes', when will all Members see the detail on what has been discussed in relation to devolution, as it is important that Members receive this information and are able to comment at the earliest opportunity ?

Councillor Knowles also commented on the recent Royal visit and the boost to morale that it provided; his thanks to Officers for the development of the Crisis Café; a request for Officers to maximise the communications regarding the forthcoming Vegan Market and finally how hurtful and damaging words can be with reference to the comments made by the Deputy Labour Leader.

Councillor Johnson commented on other Eco achievements within Market Harborough which include the awarding of a silver Eco Church award to St Dionysius's Eco Team, the Parish Church of Market Harborough, at a special service. Councillors noted that very few churches in Leicestershire have achieved this award, and also that this was achieved solely by a three woman team working towards this award.

Councillor Mrs Page asked a number of questions as follows :-

1. Is the Council looking at the wider effects and the connotations of the new 1,600 jobs, as this is in an area of low unemployment and particularly where there is currently a shortage of 1,200 jobs in Magna Park ?
2. Congratulation to HDC on the Big Green Week, and will the Council roll this out more widely to Lutterworth, Broughton Astley, Kibworth etc. ?
3. Congratulations to the Council on having identified 70 homes to be retrofitted in Market Harborough by the Green Homes Grant, however every time sub-contractors contact residents, Cllr Mrs Page receives concerned calls asking whether the sub-contractors are genuine. Therefore can the Leader ensure that Councillors are informed of the names of the companies involved and the dates that they will visit residents ?

Councillor Elliott commented that at the June Council meeting, the Leader agreed that a meeting would be arranged between the Members and the new Police Inspectorate of the Harborough District, so that the policing of the District could be discussed. Has this meeting been arranged yet ?

Councillor Sarfas commented that residents and workers are complaining that there is no bus service in Magna Park on a Sunday, particularly taking into account the number of people currently working there as well as the creation of 1,600 new jobs.

Councillor Graves asked that Councillors be informed of any contractors being recommended by Harborough District Council to carry out work for residents within the District, and when this work will commence, as occurred some years ago, for example under the Warmer Homes initiative, for work on cavity wall insulation etc.

### Leader's response

The Leader stated that a meeting has not yet been arranged with the new Police Inspector for the Harborough District, Inspector Pudie. Also a meeting is still trying to be arranged with the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Leader is not aware of the detail regarding the bus service at Magna Park, however this matter will be raised, as he is of the opinion that Magna Park pay for a contracted bus services to and from certain locations, but clarification after this meeting on this matter will be sought.

### **Post meeting response to this matter:**

*There are currently no bus services available on a Sunday to Magna Park. However, it is programmed that this position will change under the obligations relating to Magna Park North and South.*

*The current bus service timetables are available on the Magna Park website:  
<https://lutterworth.magnapark.co.uk/transport/buses/>*

*The development of Magna Park South (south of the A4304) now triggers (upon reaching a 25% occupation threshold) the need for extended bus services to be provided (including a service on Sunday's). In accordance with the relevant s106 agreement obligations, the operators of Magna Park are in regular dialogue with Arriva, and they are waiting for them to present a proposal on how the new extended services will operate as well as the delivery of new bus shelters.*

*The Plot G development on Magna Park North, also requires the delivery of extended bus services (including on Sunday's). In August 2019, in accordance with s106 obligations, the operators of Magna Park paid over £1m to Leicestershire County Council to provide bus services to the development. Since taking payment LCC have requested that £850,000 of this amount be paid directly from the operators of Magna Park to Arriva. This reallocation is the subject of an ongoing s106 Deed of Variation. The Magna Park operators have also recently asked Arriva to provide an updated bus service timetable which can then be appended to the s106 agreement.*

Regarding the Green Homes Grant, Platform Housing Group have identified the properties which require the improvement measures in their estate and the grant will be given to the Platform Housing Group to do this work. A few years ago, there was a company who was employed by the Council through a particular scheme, but only certain types of property did qualify for the particular energy efficiency measures.

The Leader proposed that an update be provided to all Councillors by Officers on any current schemes of this nature, however he is not aware of any work being currently undertaken within the District, however asked any Councillors who do have such information to provide this to the Chief Executive, to be investigated.

Subject to Cabinet approval, a copy of the residents letter regarding participation in the auctioning system for Solar Power provision for residents properties, will be sent to all Councillors before its distribution District-wide.

The Big Green event was organised by other organisations and therefore discussions would need to take place with these organisations regarding the roll-out to wider areas.

With reference to the new 1,600 jobs at Magna Park more detail will be provided.

Reassurance was provided by the Leader that all events taking place, not only on The Square are routinely advertised through a variety of routes.

Regarding the HGV/LGV retraining scheme, four local residents have been supported so far, however the Government have announced their own scheme very recently and at the moment it is not known what impact this scheme will have on the HDC scheme and an update will be provided shortly from Officers and provided to Members.

In relation to devolution, the Leader does not know yet when further information will be provided, however when available this information will be shared with Members.

The Leader thanked Cllr Johnson for the information regarding the awarding of the silver Eco Church award to St Dionysius and endorsed the work undertaken.

The Leader highlighted that within the current Local Plan there are policies which require all new developments within the District to bring forward measures that assist in reducing climate change, and that this issue will be certainly also considered in the review of the Local Plan.

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE PUBLIC

There were no questions submitted by the public.

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS

- i. The following question was submitted by Councillor Sarfas :

The MP for South Leicestershire has written to the new Health Minister regarding the Fielding Palmer Hospital, which is currently being used as a Covid Vaccination Centre. He feels, as do I, that it is very important the hospital goes back to providing the services and beds that were provided before it was used as a vaccination centre.

Do you agree?

The Leader responded as follows :-

The Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) set up a place based stakeholder group and Harborough District Council is working as part of that group, as one of the stakeholders to look at what pre-existing and future health service provision will be in the wider locality, which includes the Fielding Palmer hospital.

The Leader is aware from a flash briefing received this morning by the CCG that the Fielding Palmer hospital is continuing as a vaccination centre in the Phase 3 Vaccination Programme which is the booster programme, as well as the other vaccinations which are now being given as well. The Leader envisages that this will last for some time but does not know when that will end.

The piece of work currently being undertaken by the CCG is the important piece of work which will ultimately decide what happens in that locality in the future.

Councillor Sarfas then asked a supplementary question stating that Councillor Knowles, Beadle and himself had asked the Leader at a previous Council meeting about a meeting with the CCG and requested that the Leader rearrange that meeting, as no reply has been received.

The Leader stated that he would try to get a meeting with the CCG but would need clarity on the aim of the meeting.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET

1. Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan

Councillor King introduced the recommendation of the Cabinet from its meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

A number of comments were made by Councillors as follows :-

Councillor Sarfas expressed his support for the proposals but raised serious concerns about the effect on air quality and the amount of traffic within Lutterworth Town Centre. Also he had concerns about the amount of money being spent on the Masterplan in order to have a carpark. Also as there will be a loss of car parking spaces, he suggested that more 30 minute car parking spaces should be made available.

Councillor Dr Bremner asked for clarity on the 'Pedestrian Focussed Street Concept', as detailed on the images within section 6 of the Masterplan, as some of the images also suggest vehicle movement. He also highlighted that a few years ago, he and a former Councillor had suggested looking at 'Naked Streets' which have been developed over some years, and can be seen on streets in The Netherlands, and asked whether the images suggest a mingling of cycling and pedestrian use on what is being described as a pedestrian focussed street.

Councillor James commented that he had previously tried to use public transport in Lutterworth and found this to be a little muddled. He is disappointed that the public transport aspects don't appear to have been addressed in the Masterplan and that a public transport hub hasn't been mentioned for the town centre, particularly given the need to link with Lutterworth East.

Councillor Mrs Ackerley offered her support and commented that whilst there are a lot of good ideas within the proposals, it is not realistic to move forwards with all the proposals initially. The area alongside the Town Hall should be developed first of all as that is a focal point of the town.

Councillor Mrs Page commented that she has been involved in the Masterplan process for a considerable time. She reiterated that the significant investment in the Town Centre is not solely about air quality or transport, but to improve the town centre for residents, promoting tourism, to increase footfall within the town. Councillor Mrs Page also asked for thanks to be given to all the Officers who have been involved in the process in order to reach the current stage.

Councillor Bateman stated that it was good to see some significant investment in Lutterworth town centre, and that Lutterworth Town Council fully support the Masterplan too. He commented that the air quality within the town is improving and no remedial action has been triggered in the past three years.

Councillor Knowles is very happy to see the proposed enhancement to Lutterworth town centre, and commented that the Masterplan is a 'living document' which will evolve over time, however requested that clarity be obtained particularly with the images within the Masterplan to fully understand what is being proposed.

Councillor Mrs Robinson commented that the Masterplan proposals will enhance the town centre for residents.

Councillor King clarified that the current document is a Stage 2 Concept design, and the next steps would include commissioning consultant designers to prepare design studies, engineering analysis and cost exercises resulting in a spatially coordinated design to RIBA Stage 4 Spatial Coordination. Design studies would include consultation with the Highway Authority.

It was moved by Councillor King, seconded by Councillor Bateman and

**RESOLVED that the Lutterworth Town Centre Masterplan be adopted as Council policy, with Option 1 for the Market Place being the preferred option.**

## 2. Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)

Councillor Whelband introduced the recommendation of the Cabinet from its meeting on the 6th September 2021.

A number of comments were made by Councillors as follows :-

Councillor Knowles commented on the importance of this issue given the health issues involved, and it is critical that the PSPO is enforced within the District.

Councillor Dr Bremner commented on the lack of public information regarding psychoactive substances and how important it is to readily find information, and asked if the Council could look at drugs related

websites, including FRANK and decide whether it is appropriate to promote particular sites, in order to provide an educational element to this issue.

Councillor James offered his full support to the report and recommendations, however raised concerns that the activity arising from using psychoactive substances, can lead on to more serious things.

Councillor King commented that many people don't understand the implications and dangers of using nitrous oxide and that an educational and prevention stream is required, which will be undertaken by the Community Partnership team working with appropriate stakeholders, such as Youth Justice, schools etc.

Councillor Mrs Page reiterated the comment made by Councillor Knowles on the importance of effective enforcement, and the need to encourage residents to record sightings. Once a list of sightings is produced, the enforcers can target those areas.

Councillor Mrs Ackerley reiterated the importance of information being given and made available to the general public and also to secondary schools, particularly regarding the health risks.

Councillor Critchley commented that he has professional experience on the effects of nitrous oxide inhalation and asked whether there is a health warning on the boxes of the cannisters, and if not the Council should raise this with the government.

Councillor Fosker raised a query on the level of fine detailed in section 13 of Appendix 5 to the report and whether in the case of the inability to pay the fine, restorative justice could be applied, such as community service.

It was moved by Councillor Whelband, seconded by Councillor Bateman and

**RESOLVED that the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) as outlined in appendix 5 to the report be adopted.**

#### REPORT FROM THE CABINET

A number of queries were raised on the report as follows :-

Councillor Galton asked for clarification on the Council's position in relation to the report on the Leicester City Council Draft Local Transport Plan 4 and proposed Work Place Parking Levy consultation, and whether the Council should support the proposed Work Place Parking Levy and whether the Council would support it being extended outside the City boundary ? If the Parking Levy was supported by the Council then significant investment in alternative transport options would need to be provided.

Councillor Knowles asked for an update on the situation with the families from Afghanistan. Also are there any more details on the development in Roman Way and if engagement with residents has commenced. In relation to the overall situation with finances, and the requirement to make savings, when will Councillors be told about the impact on services, and which services will be affected.

The Leader responded to the points raised as follows :-

With regards to the Work Place Parking Levy, there are concerns that people may not pay the Parking Levy, however the money raised from the Levy will have environmental benefits to the City which does suffer from air pollution and money raised will be invested in carbon neutral transport schemes. The City Council is in the process of undertaken a consultation on this matter.

The Council is expecting Afghan families to arrive in late October and the Council is committed to assisting two families.

The Council has bought the property on Roman Way, and development of this is subject to planning permission. A full consultation will take place with surrounding residents and businesses.



Through BC25 it has been identified that the Council can save £3.2 million over the next three years, however additional savings still need to be made. An all Member briefing will take place shortly on the financial process being currently undertaken by the Council.

#### REPORT ON PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY ACTIONS

Councillor Mrs Page introduced the report highlighting that the report together with her Annual Scrutiny report of June 2021, provides a full overview of all of the activities and actions undertaken by Scrutiny over the past year. She requested that thanks be given to all the Scrutiny Members, Scrutiny Chairmen and Officers.

#### REPORTS ABOUT AND QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE BUSINESS OF JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

There were none.

#### REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Councillor Mrs Page presented the report as set out below:

Since the last meeting of Council there have been two meetings of the Communities Scrutiny Panel, held on 24th June and 29th July.

##### Communities Scrutiny – 24th June 2021

The meeting considered the following items:

- Quarter 4 Performance 2020/21
- Smarter Services Update
- Equality Plan
- Empty Property Strategy

The discussion and actions from the meeting are included in the minutes which are available on CMIS here.

##### Communities Scrutiny – 29th July 2021

The meeting considered just one item:

- Implementation of successes and lessons learnt from preparation of the adopted Harborough Local Plan 2011 - 2031

The discussion and actions from the meeting are included in the minutes which will be available on CMIS following their agreement at the Panel's next meeting on Thursday of this week.

Forthcoming meetings

Looking forward, the following items are due to be considered by Scrutiny during the Autumn:

##### Performance Scrutiny Panel – 29 September 2021

- Performance – end of Quarter 1 2021/22
- Quarterly Financial Performance – end of Quarter 1 2021/22
- The Council's Working Arrangements with SLM (Everyone Active)
- RIPA update

##### Communities Scrutiny Panel - 30 September 2021

- Community Safety Partnership – annual meeting
- Voluntary Sector Strategy

NOTICE OF MOTION (1) SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE 11.1 OF PART 4(1) OF THE COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

It was moved by Councillor King, seconded by Councillor Knowles:

“Earlier this summer UK athletes had an outstanding Olympic and Paralympic games in Toyko, with a record number of medals being awarded.

One of those who was successful was former resident of Harborough district, Mr Dylan Fletcher ,who won a Gold medal for sailing, class 49er.

I would like to move that to show its support to the outstanding achievements of UK athletes, such as Mr Fletcher, who has a strong association with the Harborough district, that this Council :

- i) Asks its officers to look at the resource implications of granting the freedom of the District to Mr Fletcher and any other relevant medal winners, from the 2021 Olympics and Paralympics, who have a strong connection with the Harborough district, namely:-
  - were born in Harborough district
  - went to school in Harborough
  - lived/worked in Harborough at some time
  
- ii) Resolves to hold an extraordinary meeting of full Council before the next Council meeting on 13th December, to consider the issue”.

**On being put to the vote the Motion was carried.**

NOTICE OF MOTION (2) SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE 11.1 OF PART 4(1) OF THE COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

It was moved by Councillor Knowles, seconded by Councillor Galton:

'As the Planning White Paper from Central Government is imminent it is opportune we should show widespread support for the principle of protecting residents' right to a say over individual planning applications in their own area.

Many local people have already expressed anger that this long-established democratic right is under threat. We therefore move that This Council believes planning works best when developers and the local community work together to shape local areas and deliver necessary new homes; and therefore calls on the Government to protect the right of communities to object to individual planning applications and that a letter be sent from this Council to the Secretary of State and the Members of Parliament whose constituencies cover parts of Harborough District confirming the views of this Council and urging their support”.

**On being put to the vote the Motion was carried.**

NOTICE OF MOTION (3) SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE 11.1 OF PART 4(1) OF THE COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

It was moved by Councillor Fosker, seconded by Councillor Knowles:

“In April 2022 there will be an introduction of a Plastic Packaging Tax.

This could be a welcome tool to tackle single-use plastic waste, especially given the continually low rates of plastic recycling - estimated at less than 10% by Greenpeace, with some of our own local refuse sites even allegedly refusing to take any plastics recently.

Sections taken from the available documents, however, clearly state that the impact of the new Plastic Packaging Tax will be significant.

Many will be aware of the Tax, arguably many will not and may be unprepared, with no alternatives lined up, having taken no positive steps to comply with the new rules and achieve the desired positive impact on the environment.

We move that this authority investigates its supply chain to ensure where appropriate our suppliers are aware. Furthermore, with so many businesses scattered across our District, HDC should undertake an awareness campaign, to highlight the implementation date of the Plastic Packaging Tax, asking businesses the simple questions: Are you aware of this? Will it impact on your business? What steps do you need to take? Is your supply chain aware?

Finally, to underline our genuine concern for the Planet, we should also pose the question: What positive steps are you taking to look at alternatives to plastic?

We should also ask Officers to report back to the Council's appropriate forum on the above".

**On being put to the vote the Motion was lost.**

#### SUPPORT FOR ACCESSING COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Council considered a report on support for accessing Council meetings. At the Council meeting on 16 November 2020, it was resolved that officers investigate the opportunity to provide a British Sign Language feed, or other suitable options, for all council committee and full council meetings to enable those with hearing loss to access the meetings.

Subsequently officers have considered the options for supporting people with hearing loss to enable them to access council meetings, particularly now that all the council formal meetings are live streamed and accessible via remote access to members of the public.

As part of this review, the Councils' Equality and Diversity Officer has been consulted on the use of British Sign Language ("BSL") for these purposes. There are some concerns about the practicality of having live BSL interpretation for all council meetings. BSL interpretation is quite expensive and realistically could potentially have limited impact.

Census 2011 figures showed that 26 Harborough District residents, aged 3 and over, used sign language as their main language. Of these 26, 17 used BSL as their preferred language and therefore BSL interpretation would be beneficial for them.

National statistics show that 1 in 5 adults in the UK have some form of hearing loss (RNID) which, looking at 2011 figures again, would equate to 13,347 adult residents in our District in 2011. The vast majority of these would not be able to understand BSL however having high quality subtitles for Council meetings would definitely be beneficial. This indicates that investing in high quality subtitles would have a greater impact on more people. Subtitles would also potentially help those residents who use BSL, as some, although not all people who are profoundly Deaf are able to read English. Instructions on how to access subtitles will be provided to members of the public via the website and there will also be an option for subtitles in different languages.

It was moved by Councillor Dann, seconded by Councillor King and

**RESOLVED that subtitles are made available for all meetings of the Cabinet, Council and its committee meetings with immediate effect.**

#### Summary of Reasons

To look at the options available to improve accessibility to the live streamed council meetings for those who are Deaf or have hearing loss.

## COUNCIL FUNCTIONS – POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Council considered a report on Council Functions – Policy Framework. The Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) sets out which powers are the responsibility of full Council and which are executive functions, over which the Leader has the power to decide who makes the decision, either him/herself, the Cabinet, individual portfolio holders or Officers.

Article 4 of Part 2 of the Constitution sets out the functions that are currently exercised by full Council. The full Council takes those decisions that form part of the Budget and the Policy Framework. Those plans and strategies that form part of the Policy Framework are detailed in paragraph 4.01.

A number of functions are the sole responsibility of Council and these are detailed in paragraph a) i). These are reserved to Council by legislation.

There is a second category of plans and strategies that the government guidance recommends should be reserved to full Council are these are set out in paragraph a) ii) of Appendix A to the report.

Councillor Knowles proposed, and Councillor Galton seconded an amendment to the recommendation that within Article 4 the Housing Strategy should remain with full Council to adopt, rather than with the Cabinet.

The Chief Executive explained the Housing Strategy is the strategy by which the Council sets up its plans on how the Council is dealing with the housing market, how the correct type of housing is provided in the correct place and how the Council ensures that it covers the different tenures of housing throughout the District. It is a very important strategy and also sets out the enforcement powers around those areas and ensures that the Council is meeting its duty to provide housing for people within the District.

Following a brief debate, Councillor King proposed and Councillor Dann that the amendment be accepted, and the Housing Strategy is “undeleted” within Appendix A to the report, and that this now becomes the substantive motion to be debated.

A point was raised that the ICT Strategy should remain with full Council, however Members noted that all decisions on policy are considered by Scrutiny, to which all Members are invited to attend, before going to Cabinet.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- (i) the agreed amendments to Article 4 come into effect on 28 September 2021; and**
- (ii) the required amendments to the Constitution as a result of paragraph 2 above be considered by the Constitutional Review Committee for referral back to Council.**

### Summary of Reasons

For members to review the current allocation of functions set out in paragraph a) ii) of Appendix A to this report and to decide whether any of the plans and strategies currently reserved to full Council should be adopted by the Cabinet.

### URGENT ITEMS

There were none.

The Meeting ended at 9.03 p.m.