

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 13th December 2021

commencing at 6.51 p.m.

Present:

Councillor Bannister (Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs Ackerley, Bateman, Beadle, Dr Bremner, Burrell, Critchley, Dann, Dunton, Elliott, Fosker, Frenchman, Galton, Golding, Graves, Hallam (via Teams), Hollick, James, Johnson, King, Knowles, Liquorish, Mahal, Modha, Nunn, Mrs Page, Mrs Robinson, Sarfas, Mrs Simpson, Whelband and Mrs Wood

Officers present: D. Atkinson (via Teams), L. Elliott, J. Evans (via Teams), S. Green, S. Hamilton, C. Mason, N. Proudfoot and V. Wenham

VICE-CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Bannister proposed a change to the order to the Agenda to move item 13: Report from the Chairman of the Climate Emergency Working Group on the Climate Emergency Action Plan before item 7, and Councillors voted in favour of this change.

A list of events attended by the Chairman and Vice Chairman since the September had been tabled, and Councillor Bannister highlighted that Councillor Bilbie had attended the Festival of Remembrance and the Christmas lights switch on event in Market Harborough, and as Vice-Chairman, he had represented the District at the presentation of the Queen's Award for voluntary services at Memphis, and attended the Remembrance Sunday service in Lutterworth.

Councillor Bannister concluded his remarks by wishing all the Councillors a Happy Christmas and a safe and healthy New Year.

DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were none.

MINUTES – 27th SEPTEMBER 2021

Councillor Knowles requested an update on the situation in relation to the families from Afghanistan, and Councillor King advised that the Council had anticipated that Afghan families would be arriving in the District in October from government centres, however this was delayed. The Council was then advised that the families would arrive in November, however this did not occur and it is now expected that families would be arriving in January 2022. Properties are available and the necessary systems are ready to welcome families to the District.

Councillor Sarfas raised a query in relation to the reply which had been given by the Leader in response to the question raised under 'Questions submitted by Members', as Councillor Sarfas had previously asked Councillor King about a meeting with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) in relation to the GP surgery and the Fielding Palmer hospital, and he didn't feel that his question had been understood.

The Chairman commented that the debate by Council on this item was to determine whether the minutes reflected what had been agreed at the meeting, and suggested that Councillor Sarfas should contact the Democratic Services team and set out clearly what was a clear reflection of that particular part of the meeting on the 27th September 2021. **ACTION: Cllr Sarfas**

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

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 27th September 2021 be received and adopted.

REPORT OF THE LEADER

The Leader preceded his report with the following additional items :-

He wished both Councillor Bilbie and Councillor Hallam full recoveries after their recent surgery and operations.

An incident occurred in a village in the parish of Leire over the preceding weekend in relation to an illicit pig farm and butchery operation, and arrests were made. Leicestershire Trading Standards are the lead investigating body. The Leader urged any members of the public who have any information on this matter to bring it to the attention of the police.

In relation to the A6 corridor, Arriva, one of the commercial bus operators, is making some changes to the X3 service from the beginning of January. The Leader had requested a meeting between Arriva and Councillors, however initially Arriva only agreed to a meeting with the MP, a local County Councillor and himself, however it is hoped that another meeting will take place to involve Councillors.

COVID19

Following the Prime Minister's broadcast last night there is a clear message:

- Get vaccinated with jabs 1 and 2, if not medically prevented from doing so.
- And get your booster- again if not medically prevented
- Follow the guidelines re washing hands and mask wearing where possible
- And work from home if you can.

Our thanks to everyone who has worked and continues to work and/or volunteer to make this happen and those who work in the front line of health care. But we also need to be under no illusions of the scale of the task ahead. We have a tremendous mountain to climb for the local health providers to work through the 106,000 patient backlog for elective care.

Last week we also had Ofsted announce that education and learning has been badly affected. Young people especially those in early years and older will need to be helped to progress and catch up on delays in development and learning brought about by the pandemic shutdowns.

Wherever possible Harborough district Council will continue to work with health and other stakeholders collaboratively to do what we can to help tackle these growing issues as well as build back better.

Economic Growth and Recovery

Since we last met in late September there has been more activity by the Council in developing and continuing to roll 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. I am grateful for the team supplying me with the latest update:-

- **HGV/ Commercial Drivers Training Initiative** – in response to the national HGV driver shortage, and with a very short lead-time, Harborough District Council launched a programme to support local residents to undertake training to become commercial/ HGV/ or LGV drivers, using a small amount of the discretionary element of the ARG Funding. We were able to establish partnerships with logistics businesses and training agencies in order to ensure that the provision of such training can be delivered quickly and is directly linked to local employment opportunities. So far we have funded 12 individuals, but by early 2022, we anticipate having supported nearly 20 individuals to be trained and taken up employment in the local logistics sector, with a number of them having previously been either unemployed, or in low-paid employment.
- **Shop Front Enhancement Grants Scheme** – as a means of supporting the local retail sector and helping to improve the built environment of our town centres for both visitors and residents, we have established a grants scheme to help businesses and building owners, invest in building improvements. This includes support for the decoration of shop frontages, new windows or doors, installation or restoration of shop awnings, new advertising signage, including hanging signs and training to help to dress windows attractively and seasonally. So far, we have received well over 50 enquiries, both from businesses within our main town centres, as well as a number of businesses from within some of our smaller villages, with 23 grants having so far been paid out, totally nearly £45K.
- **Harborough Jobs support service** - in the last couple of months we have established a monthly Job Club in Lutterworth, where the Job Centre was closed several years ago, which means that attendees don't have to travel to Leicester or Market Harborough. In particular, this acts as a 'one stop shop' for accessing the various agencies involved in supporting job seekers, including Job Centre Plus, National Careers Service, the Work Live Leicestershire project, as well as our economic development team. Numbers of attendees are gradually starting to build up, as people start to become aware of the Job Club, and as the agencies start to refer clients. Obviously, we don't need to operate a similar Job Club in Market Harborough, where there is a fully operational Job Centre Plus, although we do work with the same partner agencies to ensure a similar 'joined up' approach to the advice and support which is offered.
- **Covid Grants for Businesses (Additional Restrictions Grants)** – whereas many Councils are simply operating the government ARG scheme grants to support businesses in survival mode, in early August this year, we adapted our grants to support three new positive themes, to promote the principles of 'building back better'. These are:
 - **Go Green** - helping businesses to reduce their carbon footprint, increase energy efficiency and reduce fixed costs, (e.g., adopting green transport solutions, including Bikes and E-bikes, using E-Vehicles / delivery vans, introducing LED lighting, solar

panels, insulation, and heating pumps etc.). So far, we have funded 15 businesses with Go Green projects, although this will receive a bigger push in the lead up to the Go Green Business Convention in January.

- **Go Digital** - supporting digital technology solutions which improve business performance and encourage wider, online access to customers, (e.g., digital marketing, software & hardware, mobile apps, digital training/ courses, digital signage, cyber security, etc.). So far, we have funded 49 businesses with Go Digital projects.
 - **Innovation** - encouraging the adoption of sustainable and innovative solutions, by reviewing product or service delivery to improve operations or service provision, (e.g., innovation to reduce of packaging, support for business diversification, moving to more local supply chains, developing solutions to support faster turnaround on products or services etc.). So far, we have funded 53 businesses with Innovation projects.
 - **Business Survival** – whilst we are obviously particularly pushing the above three themes, we still offer Business Survival grants, as the ‘funding of last resort’ to support businesses still severely impacted by the extended Covid-19 restrictions and which have not been able to get any other support from other sources. Since the new schemes came in, we have funded 38 businesses with Business Survival grants.
- **Go Green Business Convention – Monday 31 January 2022** – on the back of the recent COP26, we are currently planning this event to try to engage local businesses in thinking about how they can work towards Net Zero and contribute towards the development of the ‘Green Economy’ across Harborough District. This is planned to take place using one of the larger empty rooms at the Harborough Grow-on Centre on Monday 31 January 2022. This will double up as an opportunity to introduce local businesses to, and raise the profile of, the Harborough Grow-on Centre.
 - **Visit for Elected Members to the Harborough Grow-on Centre on Monday 31 January 2022** – linked to the above, and a recent presentation to the Performance Scrutiny Panel, we are hoping to use this opportunity to invite Elected Members for a tour of the Harborough Grow-on Centre, after the Go Green Business Convention on Monday 31 January 2022. This will operate on a ‘drop-in’ basis from 5 – 7pm that evening.
 - **EV Charging in Rural Areas** – over the next few months, we are planning to use some of the government ARG Covid recovery funding to try support a number of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points, aimed at encouraging more visitors to the area using electric vehicles, as well as to support residents charging their electric vehicles whilst using local services within villages.

Greener and Cleaner

As part of my regular feature about how we are working to make Harborough a cleaner and greener place I thought it would be helpful to explain how we are helping our flora and fauna.

Harborough District Council do, wherever possible, plant to promote pollinators. Pesticide is used only in limited areas by trained operatives and always in accordance with legislation and manufacturer’s instructions. Spraying close to watercourses is not permitted. Insecticides are no longer used on any part of the ground’s maintenance contract. We have been actively planting wildflower areas to support pollinators, including the award-winning site at Welland Park.

In addition, we promote natural and semi natural green space in all developments. The [Open Spaces Strategy 2021](#) and Provision for [Open Space Sport and Recreation 2021](#) has a requirement to provide natural and semi natural greenspace as part of development at the rate of 8.5 ha per 1000 in the new

development across the entire district. Wildflower meadows, tree planting and aquatic planting as part of SUDs schemes can be part of natural and semi natural greenspace provision.

Recent projects that have been supported by HDC from Section 106 funding include:

1. Robert Smyth Academy tree planting (2021)
2. Smeeton Westerby/ Langton Brook wetland (2022)

More schemes will follow I've no doubt next year with Her Majesty's Jubilee and the promotion of the Jubilee Canopy.

Earlier today, Leicestershire County Council announced its new tree website. It went live last week, following increased publicity through media and social media during [National Tree Week](#).

On the website you'll find:

- An [interactive tree map](#) of the county, showing tree planting, and a totaliser of how many trees we've planted
- A form for landowners, communities, organisations and individuals to [record when they plant trees](#)
- Recent news articles, including those from National Tree Week
- Tree planting advice, and information about visiting our woodlands
- A tree strategy and [tree charter](#), which was launched recently at Martinshaw Primary School in Groby.

You can find the tree website at www.leicestershire.gov.uk/trees

Whilst on 30th November, Harborough District Council was able to announce yet another success in its war against the criminal fly-tippers with the issuing of yet another £400 fixed penalty notice, today the LGA (Local Government Association) announced that three in five councils did not carry out any prosecutions last year for fly-tipping while one in five issued no fixed penalty notices. I am delighted that here at Harborough because of decisions that we have made the volume of incidents is massively reduced and we have issued scores of FPNs and warning notices. I remind everyone that we investigate every case and wherever possible we will continue to seek a Fixed Penalty fine or a trip to the magistrates for the worse offenders.

Finally, last week, **National Grid** launched their report in to their research about **Empowering Climate Action** and in particular about *Empowering climate action through local authorities: Opportunities and challenges in the energy transition*

"This report, brings together insights their consumer research, with insights from roundtables with elected representatives and council officers from local authorities across Great Britain this Autumn, to understand how communities across the country can be supported in the energy transition.

The report highlights how Councils have a key role to play in helping to deliver the transformation needed to achieve a green and fair energy transition. It highlights how councils' best practice work on climate change and their role as a critical link to local communities, will be pivotal in helping to achieve the UK's net zero emissions target by 2050."

<https://www.nationalgrideso.com/future-energy/our-net-zero-work/empowering-climate-action>

I am very delighted to report to Council that Harborough District Council's work on increasing levels of participation in energy transition was one of the 4 case studies highlighted in this report. So many thanks to our team involved in this area of work.

Levelling Up, devolution and devo deals

Since we last met in September, Leicestershire County Council approached all of the Leicestershire districts with a draft of their county deal submission requesting we co-sign a letter of support, which we

all agreed to. Since then there has not been much to say about this whilst government has considered further.

What we can now say is that no announcements are expected until the new year and that the report in last week's Independent newspaper was wide of the mark. I have reproduced below the commentary received from the [District Councils Network](#) this morning:-

We've received an update from DLUHC officials over the weekend confirming that there's no substance to the story in the Independent. Here's the department's official position:

Will HMG mandate elected mayors in future devolution deals?

No. Strong local leadership will be fundamental for all devolution deals. Devolution is at its heart about empowering local residents and ensuring they have a say in decisions affecting them and their communities, and about whether services are being delivered effectively. Whilst high-profile, directly elected individual leaders (such as a mayor) can provide a single point of accountability to local citizens and can act as a champion for their area, we will also consider other governance proposals that increase stability and strengthen local leadership over a sensible geography.

Is HMG intending to scrap two-tier local government and create a single-tier of local government across the country?

No. There are no plans for top-down re-organisation of local government. Local government reorganisation is not a pre-requisite for a County Deal and we expect to do county deals with two-tier areas, unitarised areas and areas with a mixture of the two. Reorganisation remains a locally-led avenue available and we believe the local government reorganisation process that Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset are currently going through will help them find appropriate governance as well as delivering other benefits, but it will not be a requirement for a deal.

And finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year for 2022.

Comments on the Leader's report

Councillor Knowles asked a number of questions as follows :-

1. As the Covid 'fall-out' will last for some considerable time, and Omicron is a very serious variant, any activity that can be undertaken to improve the situation regarding vaccines will be a positive step, given the government target of vaccinating one million people per day. Would HDC look at our facilities to see what we can offer in relation to areas that can be used by the Military or volunteers to provide the vaccinations ?
2. A6 corridor and bus service; just over two years a similar situation occurred and an extensive petition was provided, supported by the relevant Ward Members, other Harborough councillors and himself, to underline the importance of that service. As the District is largely rural, any impact on the bus service causes a huge effect. Could the Leader confirm whether Arriva are aware that of the previous situation ?
3. Councillor Knowles concurred with the Leaders comments in relation to the incident in Leire.
4. Levelling Up / devolution deals; can a guarantee be given the Councillors will receive a full report on this matter as early as possible in the New Year ?
5. Greener and Cleaner; HDC should take on the responsibility for co-ordinating and overseeing the tree planting and making sure that plans are in place for the long-term maintenance of the planted trees within the various programmes.

6. EV charging in rural areas; could clarification be given as to what extent HDC is liaising with Parish Councils regarding the installation of EV points within the various villages ?
7. Regarding Harborough jobs and support, can a guarantee be given that the local help and support being offered in Lutterworth will continue long-term ?
8. Economic growth and recovery; could clarification be given on the provision of the training and logistics on the individuals being assisted, as it been advised previously that one provider would be used in order to ensure best value and ensure more people would be helped ?

In relation to the Leader's comments on Covid at the start of his report, Councillor Beadle highlighted comments made recently by the Leicestershire Police and Crime Commissioner in particular 'that people shouldn't be brow-beaten into wearing face masks, and enforcing the wearing of face masks removes people's freedoms, and that there is scant evidence that the new variant is serious'. Councillor Beadle asked whether the Leader was in agreement with him that these statements were ill-judged and that the comments would make the role of the police more difficult, or that the mixed messaging is helpful ?

Councillor Graves asked whether the two relevant Ward Members in relation to the incident in Leire had already been informed, or would be informed shortly ?

Councillor Sarfas raised concerns that the Climate Emergency Plan report for 2022 to 2030 is clearly important, however due to the number of reports for consideration at this meeting, and the reduction in the number of Council meetings from eight to four, it is difficult to give proper consideration to all the reports, as well as a considerable amount of paper being used for the agendas. Can therefore the Leader reduce the number of reports being considered at the Council meetings to ensure they are more balanced ?

Councillor James asked how many electric charging points are being considered, and whether these are rapid charging ? In relation to the tree planting at Robert Smyth Academy, approximately how many trees were planted ?

Regarding the Economic Growth and Recovery section, Councillor Dann stated how pleased he was that the HGV/ Commercial Drivers Training Initiative had been such a great success, and congratulated the Council that twelve individuals have already been trained and expecting a further twenty in the New Year. Will this initiative carry on into 2022 ?

Leader's response

The Leader responded that the Council has made available Council owned assets to help with the vaccination programme throughout the pandemic. Discussions are currently underway to utilise one of the Council's facilities, however the decision as to whether the facility will be used rests with the NHS.

Regarding the A6 bus service, Arriva are aware of the previous situation.

In relation to the Levelling Up / devolution deals, no further information is available at this stage, other than a devo White Paper being produced in the New Year, and at that stage a report will be brought to Councillors to explain the situation. The Leader is happy to circulate a letter which was sent to government, signed by all the Councils in Leicestershire stating that all parties supported the submission of a devo County deal by Leicestershire County Council. **ACTION: Councillor King**

The EV Charging points are using part of the Council's additional restrictions grants funding, which has to be allocated for spending by the end of March 2022. Discussions are currently underway with Parish

Councils, community groups etc regarding the opportunity for joint funding for charging point, based on demand and opportunities, which will be the rapid charging points. An update will be provided in due course.

With regards to the job situation in Lutterworth, unemployment in Lutterworth East is currently the highest in the Harborough district. Currently there is not a job centre in Lutterworth, which is why the job club was established and this is projected to continue into 2022.

In relation to the HGV/ Commercial Drivers Training Initiative, one provider is currently being used, paid for by HDC, and funding for this initiative will come to an end at the end of March 2022.

The Leader declined to comment on the alleged remarks made by the Police and Crime Commissioner as he does not know whether or not the remarks were made.

As far as the Leader is aware, Ward Members were informed about the situation in Leire, and a link was sent by him to all Members before this Council meeting.

The Leader commented that he doesn't control how many reports come to Council meetings however highlighted that if there were more meetings Councillors would have to travel more frequently, and whether it is 'greener' to have more reports at fewer meetings, or travel to more meetings. The Leader advised that a Members Advisory Task Panel will be shortly established to look at ways of working for Members, to be chaired by Councillor Dann, and Members are requested to be involved in this Task Panel.

The Leader stated that approximately 6,000 trees were planted at Robert Smyth Academy, and the Council assisted with some of the technical work required. The main co-ordinator for tree planting is Leicestershire County Council, as detailed in the following link www.leicestershire.gov.uk/trees together with the interactive tree map, detailed within his report.

The landowner is responsible for the maintenance of any trees, and in any cases of the Council being the landowner, trees will be maintained accordingly. The Council is looking to work with local organisations who are looking to increase the tree coverage in the Harborough District, and exploratory discussions have already taken place with a few organisations, particularly in relation to the Queen's Jubilee and the Green Canopy Proposal from the Woodland Trust.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE PUBLIC

The following questions were submitted by Dr Tim Claydon of Fieldhead Close, Market Harborough:

- 1.a. *When will the delivery plan and the communications plan- referred to in the Action Plan document but yet to be formulated- be presented and how will they be drawn up, i.e. will there be further public consultation ?*
- b. *What will the scope of the delivery plan be ?*
- c. *Will it apply to Council operations and estate only or will it extend to decisions and actions affecting the district as a whole ?*

Supplementary question:

- 1d. *I would like some more information, if possible, on the timing of the two development and communications plans - when will they be in place ?*

2. *The draft Action Plan states that Council will report annually on progress made in its delivery. How will progress be measured and reported to the public ?*

Supplementary question:

- 2a. *To have made any meaningful reduction in CO2 emissions across the District by 2030, some major changes will have to have been made by households and businesses including farms, and that the Council has a major role to play in supporting and making these changes. So how does HDC plan to engage and involve residents in this process ? Is it aware, for example of the new Climate Engagement programme that is designed to support local authorities in building support for local action on the climate emergency ?*

3. *Will the Council agree to change the wording of the last bullet point on page 19 of the Climate Emergency Action Plan document from 'Embed consideration of carbon reduction in all Council operations and decision-making principles' to 'Embed the requirement to reduce carbon emissions in all Council operations and decision-making principles' as this better reflects the urgent need to ensure priority is given to reducing CO 2 emissions in the face of the climate crisis ?*

Supplementary question:

- 3a. *I will take that as a 'no' then. I would like to point out that considering CO2 reductions and aiming to reduce those as far as is practicable are not really inspiring messages to send out in the face of the situation that we are in. I am personally quite disappointed that the Council has not used much stronger wording and shown in writing a much stronger commitment. I am not going to pre-judge what they do, and I know the Council has been working, and is working, in various ways to improve environmental issues and to tackle climate change, but I do think that if it is taking on a leadership role, it needs to be very firm and very explicit in its commitment to taking on that role.*

Councillor Bateman, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environment & Waste, responded as follows, and provided written responses to the supplementary questions to Dr Claydon after the meeting :

1. The delivery plan will be part of the corporate delivery plan. The delivery plan will cover individual costed projects to reduce emissions or build resilience. It will also include information on partnership projects, so will cover projects for the whole district as well as council own estate.
- 1d. The delivery plan will be developed over the next 6 months, but will be a live document with new projects included as funding or opportunities become available. The communications plan will be delivered in tandem.
2. As set out in the Council report it is proposed that the Climate Emergency Action Plan forms part of the Corporate Plan moving forwards and as such will be embedded as part of the Councils vision for the future and its implementation will be monitored as part of the Council performance management process, which includes quarterly updates to the Cabinet and also reporting to the Scrutiny Commission. In addition an inventory of council emissions will be published annually, including information on gas and electricity use in council buildings (scope 1 and 2) and emissions from contracted services (Scope 3). A report on district wide emissions will also be collated from Government data.
- 2a. The Council will look at a variety of ways to engage with our residents and business and this will be captured in the communications plan.

3. The Council declared a Climate emergency At their meeting of the 24th June 2019. The Council committed to reducing the Council's own emissions to net zero, as far as practical by 2030. The Action Plan has been developed in line with the approved mandate from Council.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS

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

Cllr King, do you believe that your views on Lutterworth East match those views of the people of Lutterworth ?.

The Leader responded as follows :-

Thanks for the question. The answer is not as simple as yes or no.

At the end of the day, as I have stated before this is a billion pound investment in Harborough district, which will deliver 1,261 homes before 2031 during the adopted Harborough local plan period and in total some 2,750 homes when fully built out.

There will be hundreds of new affordable homes for hundreds for families from Lutterworth and across Harborough and specialist accommodation. There will be 2 new primary schools, a specialist education facility, major investment in secondary education. Significant contributions to community infrastructure directly provided and/or via s106 payments. There will be a diversification of employment land uses, 23 hectares of retail and business space to create 2,500 jobs, a spine road, protection & enhancement of the SSSI Misterton Marshes and 100 hectares of green space – half of the site ! A Community Park, playing fields, allotments, woodland, trees and hedgerows and new ecological habitats, I could continue

At the end of the day we need more homes for a growing population, even today there are nearly 600 families on our housing waiting list despite all the ones we have built so far. The Council has democratically given its consent.

Councillor Sarfas then asked a supplementary question, with the assistance of Councillor James as to why a new secondary school is not going to be built in Lutterworth East ?

The Leader replied that the gathering of evidence of what provision is required on any development is a function of the County Council's Education Strategic Planning team and they provide the evidence for such matters. The evidence in this case is whilst there is a significant contribution to secondary education, there would not be sufficient demand, as the development is not big enough to create the demand for a brand new secondary school. If Councillor Sarfas does require more information on this matter there is very useful information on the County Council website about this decision is worked out.

- ii. The following question was submitted by Councillor Beadle :

On behalf of central government, HDC collects business rates annually of £24.8M (net) from the completed phases of Magna Park, Lutterworth. Regarding this £24.8M, what percentage does this represent of the total business rates collected by HDC, how much of this is retained by HDC, and what sum does the government return to HDC annually in the form of revenue support grants etc. ?.

The Leader responded as follows :-

The total collectable business rates for the Council, net of allowable reliefs, is £39.0m. In respect of the receipts from Magna Park, again, net of allowable reliefs, is circa £24.8m; which represents 63.6% of the total collectable.

With regard to how much “net” business rates the Council actually receives, District Councils receive 40% of net receipts (*). This amount is subject to several adjustments; some reduce the net amount due, these include the government imposed levy and other technical adjustments; including bad debt and appeals provisions and the cost of collecting business rates itself, whilst others increase the net amount, such as section 31 grant that compensate the Council for government policy. The estimated net business rates to be received by the Council for 2021/22 is £3.7m, as approved by members in February when they approved the 2021/22 budget.

In respect of the amounts paid by government to the Council, this information is shown in the budget report that Councillors approved in February. For 2021/22 and excluding the one-off grants for Covid the Council received a total of £2.4m in core grant; £2m for New Homes Bonus, £250k for Lower Tier Services Grant and £100k for Local Council Tax Support Grant. However, it should be remembered that 2021/22 has been an exceptional year because of Covid and if Covid had not occurred, the Council would have only received £1.1m in New Homes Bonus.

(*) NB. Of the total business rates collected, District Councils receive 40%, County Councils receive 9% and Fire Authorities 1%. The balance of 50% is paid to the government.

Councillor Beadle then asked a supplementary question, requesting more clarity in the second paragraph to the response as the 40% of net receipts amounts to c. £10million, however after technical adjustments have made the Council receives £3.7 million and therefore can a breakdown of the various elements of these technical adjustments be provided please ?

The Leader asked the Section 151 Officer to send a reply by email to Councillor Beadle after the meeting.

ACTION: Section 151 Officer

iii. The following question was submitted by Councillor Knowles :

Members put forward notice of motions at Full Council on a variety of issues. As and when these are debated at Full Council, the result of those approved require a variety of actions such as letters to third parties, reports to Council or committees etc. Could you tell me please, what is a reasonable length of time to expect that required actions will have taken place and the decision of Full Council delivered ?.

The Chairman responded as follows:-

The scope and related action or actions arising from each individual approved Motion will vary, depending on the nature of the particular Motion.

Therefore given that there will be a wide variety of permutations that the associated actions may take, it is not feasible to accurately state what could be considered a reasonable length of time for these actions to have taken place.

However, the Council will ensure that the actions for all approved Motions are implemented within the framework of the Corporate Plan and specifically within the relevant departmental annual business plan, ensuring that the related decision of Full Council is delivered in a timely way.

Councillor Knowles then asked a supplementary question asking whether the Chairman would agree that these actions, should be solely reflective of the original motion passed by Council, to which the Chairman agreed.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

The Council considered a report updating Members on the Climate Emergency Action Plan following a consultation process.

The Chairman of the Climate Emergency Working Group and Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environment & Waste stated that the Council signed the Climate Local Commitment in April 2013, and since that date there have been several changes to the Council's operations have taken place and have been implemented and since 2008, emissions have been reduced from the Council's estate by 49%.

The Council declared a Climate emergency in June 2019. The Council committed to reducing the Council's own emissions to net zero, as far as practical by 2030. To achieve this the council committed to producing a Climate Emergency Action Plan.

Following the declaration of the Climate Emergency, a cross party member working group was established to develop the action. The draft Climate Emergency Action Plan was presented to Council in December 2019, with agreement to go out to wider community consultation.

The Consultation took place between 31st May and 31st July 2021. The communications plan was designed to ensure wide engagement with the pandemic in mind. Web pages were designed with a link to an online consultation page. The consultation was publicised in council newsletters, social media and press releases. Cllr Bateman also appeared on BBC Radio Leicester and HFM. Posters were also prepared and sent round the district and secondary schools and interested parties were contacted.

131 responses to the consultation were received online, in addition 3 written responses were received from groups. A workshop took place on-line using Teams with representatives of interested groups. 15 representatives of different groups took part. The analysis of the responses indicated that over 75% of respondents (71 of 102 who answered) agreed with our Climate Emergency commitments. The responses were split almost equally between male and female. There were responses from a range of age groups, but the group of 65 plus had the highest number of responses at almost 29%. Only 4% of responses came from those under 18.

The responses to the questions were collated and reviewed in the light of council activity. Appendix B is a summary of the consultation and the council's responses. The draft Climate Emergency Action Plan was updated in the light of the consultation and the council's response. The updated document is included as Appendix A to the report.

The Council is considering the draft Corporate Plan as a separate report to this meeting. It is proposed that the Climate Emergency Action Plan forms part of the Corporate Plan moving forwards and as such will be embedded as part of the Councils vision for the future and its implementation will be monitored as part of the Council performance management process, which includes quarterly updates to the Cabinet and also reporting to the Scrutiny Commission.

A substantial debate followed, with a number of Members expressing surprise of the recommendation to dissolve the Climate Emergency Working Group, given the importance of the topic. A number of Members commented that the Group had carried out excellent work.

Councillor Knowles proposed an amendment to the third recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Dr Bremner to read as follows :-

1. That members approve and adopt the Climate Emergency Action Plan set out in Appendix A to the report;
2. Subject to approval of 1 above that the Climate Emergency Action Plan is embedded in the Council's Corporate Plan to ensure ongoing monitoring and oversight;
3. That the Climate Emergency Working Group meets at least twice per annum and to review and act as appropriate.

The substantive Motion as detailed in 1 to 3 above was then discussed.

Councillor Graves also requested a recorded vote which was supported by five members.

Recorded vote

For: Cllrs Beadle, Dr Bremner, Burrell, Dunton, Elliott, Fosker, Galton, Graves, James, Johnson, Knowles, Sarfas and Mrs Simpson (13)

Against: Cllrs Mrs Ackerley, Bateman, Critchley, Dann, Frenchman, Golding, Hollick, King, Liquorish, Mahal, Modha, Mrs Page, Mrs Robinson, Whelband and Mrs Wood (15)

Abstention: Cllr Bannister (1)

The substantive motion, proposed by Councillor Knowles, seconded by Councillor Dr Bremner was lost.

Debate continued on the original Motion.

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

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The Climate Emergency Action Plan as set out in Appendix A be approved and adopted;
- (ii) The Climate Emergency Action Plan is embedded in the Council's Corporate Plan to ensure ongoing monitoring and oversight;
- (iii) The Climate Emergency Working Group is formally dissolved and thanked for its work in developing the Action Plan to enable the Council to progress its commitment to reducing its emissions to net zero.

Summary of Reasons

The Climate Emergency Action Plan should be linked and approved in line with the Council's Corporate Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET

1. Development Management Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Councillor Bateman introduced the recommendation of the Cabinet from its meeting on the 11th October 2021.

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

RESOLVED that the Development Management Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) attached at Appendix B to this report be adopted by Council.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

After consideration of the above item at 9.09 pm, and as per the provisions of the Council's Constitution Part 4, Section 1, Paragraph 4.2 (Duration of Meetings), it was proposed by Councillor King, seconded by Councillor Bateman and voted on that the meeting should continue beyond the three hour time limit to allow the remaining items to be determined.

A comprehensive discussion followed with a number of Members raising their dissatisfaction with the proposal.

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

The Director of Law and Governance advised therefore that the meeting automatically would cease at 9.30pm, and therefore the business which had not been concluded would be considered at the next scheduled meeting of Council on the 21st February 2022. However in order for the Council to follow good governance, the Treasury Management report and the urgent item on the Tax Base would need to be considered at this meeting.

URGENT ITEM: COUNCIL TAX BASE 2022/23

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

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the calculation of the Council Tax base for the year 2022/23 be approved;
- (ii) in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 SI 2012/2914, the amount calculated by Harborough District Council as its Council Tax base for the year 2022/23 shall be 37,389.35 and
- (ii) the Council Tax base for individual Parishes for 2022/23 be calculated in accordance with the same principles as the Council's overall Council Tax Base as detailed in Appendix A to the report.

Summary of Reasons

To set the Council's tax base for 2022/23.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET OF 29TH NOVEMBER 2021

3. Mid-Year Treasury Management Report 2021/22 With Prudential Indicators

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

RESOLVED that the change to the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy as detailed in Section 7 to the report be approved.

4. Draft Corporate Plan

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

RESOLVED that the Draft Corporate Plan content as reported to Cabinet be agreed for wider circulation and consultation with stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING OF 20TH OCTOBER 2021

1. Appointment Of External Auditor

It was moved by Councillor Dr Bremner, seconded by Councillor Wood and

RESOLVED that:

- (i) **The Council opts in to the appointing person arrangements made by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) for the appointment of external auditors (option 1).**
- (ii) **Authority be delegated to the Director; Finance, ICT and Assets to submit the formal notice of acceptance and provision of information to PSAA as required.**

Summary of Reasons

To ensure that the Council appoints its external auditor in an open and transparent way.

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CABINET OF 29TH NOVEMBER 2021

2. Planning Application Local Validation List

Councillor Graves asked what the key major changes are to the list and the Chairman requested that the Director of Planning and Regeneration provide a full email response to Councillor Graves.

ACTION: Director of Planning and Regeneration

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

RESOLVED that the up-to-date Planning Application Local Validation List be adopted as attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

The report was noted.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting adjourned at 9.30pm, to be re-convened on Monday 21st February 2022 at 6.30pm.

ADJOURNED MEETING OF COUNCIL

Monday 21st February 2022

Commencing at 6.30pm

Present:

Councillor Bannister (Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs Ackerley, Bateman, Beadle, Dr Bremner, Burrell, Champion, Critchley, Dann, Dunton, Elliott, Fosker, Galton, Golding, Graves, Hallam, Hollick (from 6.37pm), James, Johnson, King, Knowles, Mahal, Modha, Nunn, Mrs Page, Rickman, Mrs Robinson, Sarfas, Mrs Simpson, Whelband and Mrs Wood

Officers present: D. Atkinson, L. Elliott, J. Evans, S. Green, S. Hamilton, C. Mason and B. Morris

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

On behalf of the Council, the Vice-Chairman sent best wishes for a speedy recovery to Councillor Bilbie who was unwell.

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CABINET OF 29TH NOVEMBER 2021

5. Leicester & Leicestershire Authorities – Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) relating to Strategic Warehousing and Logistics

Councillor King introduced the recommendation relating to the Leicester & Leicestershire Authorities – Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) relating to Strategic Warehousing and Logistics, highlighting the importance of the Council signing the Statement as by not signing would place the Council in considerable risk of being unable to fulfil the Council's duty to co-operate, which would result in an inability to adopt a future Local Plan not only by Harborough District Council but by any remaining Boroughs or Districts throughout Leicestershire, who would not be able to progress and finalise any Local Plans with the Planning Inspectorate.

By becoming a signatory to the SoCG, is not legally binding on the Council but it does assert the existing commitment on behalf of the Council to joint working on long term strategic planning for strategic warehousing and logistics across Leicester and Leicestershire.

Councillor King confirmed that it is not an allocation of sites however it is setting out an evidence base which is being shared and paid for across a number of authorities across Leicester and Leicestershire to ensure that everyone is working from the same evidence base. Previously the various authorities used different evidence bases which had caused a number of disagreements.

A comprehensive debate followed.

Councillor Graves also requested a recorded vote which was supported by more than four other members.

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

RESOLVED that the Council becomes a signatory to the Statement of Common Ground as detailed in Appendix A to the report.

Recorded vote

For: Cllrs Mrs Ackerley, Bateman, Dr Bremner, Champion, Critchley, Dann, Hallam, Hollick, King, Mahal, Modha, Nunn, Mrs Page, Rickman, Mrs Robinson, Whelband and Mrs Wood (17)

Against: Cllrs Beadle, Burrell, Dunton, Elliott, Fosker, Galton, Graves, James, Johnson, Knowles, Sarfas and Mrs Simpson (12)

Abstention: Cllrs Bannister and Golding (2)

REPORT FROM THE CABINET

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

Councillor Johnson queried the why the Equality Plan which had been considered by Cabinet on the 1st November hadn't been brought to Council, and it was confirmed by the Interim Monitoring Officer that as per the Council's Constitution, there is not a requirement for this report to come to Council.

Councillor Knowles commented on the fact that the bad debt write off is approaching £400,000 and asked for a more detail on this matter. The Director Finance, ICT and Assets advised that debt is written off by the Council as the very last resort, and it is usually in relation to businesses which are in liquidation or in administration. Councillor King commented that the bad debt was due to the liquidation three years ago of a company called Bensons for Beds which had a warehouse at Magna Park.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING OF 20TH OCTOBER 2021

2. LGA Model Code of Conduct

Councillor Dr Bremner introduced the recommendation of the Audit and Standards Meeting from its meeting on the 20th October 2021, highlighting that training will be provided to Members in early 2022, and requested that the Model Code of Conduct be distributed to Parish Council and for them to receive appropriate training too.

It was moved by Councillor Dr Bremner, seconded by Councillor Nunn and

RESOLVED that Appendix B to the report – Local Government Association Model Code of Conduct with local amendments be adopted.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE OF THE 29TH JUNE 2021

1. Proposed amendments to the Constitution – Financial Procedure Rules

Councillor King introduced the recommendation of the Constitutional Review Committee of the 29th June 2021.

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

RESOLVED that the proposed amendments relating to the Financial Procedure Rules as detailed in the report be approved and adopted – namely that the Financial Procedure Rules are amended to include the Reserve Strategy as detailed in paragraph 1.2 and amendments to Paragraph O as set out in paragraph 1.3 to the report of the Constitutional Review Committee on 29th June 2021.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE OF THE 29TH JUNE 2021

2. Proposed amendments to the Constitution – Contract Procedure Rules

Councillor King introduced the recommendation of the Constitutional Review Committee of the 29th June 2021.

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

RESOLVED that the proposed amendments relating to the Contract Procedure Rules as detailed in Appendix A to the report of the Constitutional Review Committee on 29th June 2021 be approved and adopted; subject to a number of typographical changes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE OF THE 29TH JUNE 2021

3. Proposed amendments to the Constitution – Principles of Delegation

Councillor King introduced the recommendation of the Constitutional Review Committee of the 29th June 2021.

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

RESOLVED that the proposed amendments relating to the Principles of Delegation as detailed in Appendix B to the report of the Constitutional Review Committee on 29th June 2021 be approved and adopted.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE OF THE 9TH NOVEMBER 2021

1. Proposed amendments to the Constitution – Financial Procedure Rules

Councillor King introduced the recommendation of the Constitutional Review Committee of the 9th November 2021.

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

RESOLVED that the amendments to the Constitution to reflect recent decisions of Council and primarily to the Council's Financial Procedure Rules set out in Appendix B (as updated with grammatical changes) are considered and recommended to Council for approval and adoption as appropriate.

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

There were none.

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

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

"The decision to move to the Strong Leader and Executive model was taken by Council at its meeting on 4th April 2011. The report titled Changing Governance Arrangements. We all accept that Times change, needs evolve. The question as of today, is the decision taken more than ten years ago still the best outcome for the delivery of services to our community?"

Does the termed Strong Leader and Executive model utilise the wide range of talents available within the pool of councillors to deliver the best for our residents, our district and the collective future needs? After ten years it is surely beneficial to review this model and to either endorse it as still being the best for the needs of Harborough District or to look at the alternatives and to evaluate if the alternatives would give a better future for the serving of our communities.

We move that the officers be requested to produce a report outlining the alternatives that are available to the current model, produce a detailed document that evaluates the comparable options along side the current model and that this report be put before a special meeting of Full Council for consideration where Full Council will be asked to either, endorse the continued use of the current model known as Strong Leader and Cabinet or make the decision, following the evaluation of the alternatives, to decide to change from the current model".

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

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

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

"UK Plastic and General Recycling

Many Members will recall that during 2018/19-2019/2020 several questions, motions and extensive press coverage was devoted to understanding the amounts recycling waste produced by Harborough District Council and Leicestershire generally, what happens to it and where it is processed. To repeat a comment in one of the news articles, our responsibility for recycling does not end at the kerbside or at the tip sites.

Nationally it was exposed that UK recycling waste was being transported across the world for sorting and disposal specifically to Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia. Plastic waste that was contaminated,

up to 50%, was being dumped in the Oceans causing contamination and death to sea life. Following a change of Government in Malaysia thousands of tonnes of waste was returned to the UK.

Now it seems that we are dumping plastic waste on Turkey with our plastic shopping bags seen floating off their coastline. We continue to dump waste on other countries and much of it is burned in the open air damaging the health of local people, killing wildlife and polluting oceans.

Working and living conditions are often appalling, akin to modern slavery and encouraging immigration for desperate people.

In the UK we produce more plastic waste per person than other countries second only to USA. Less than 10% of the plastic that we use is recycled in the UK. As a District Council committed to doing our bit acting on the Climate Emergency, we need to play our part to stop this appalling practice as does our County Council and National Government. We need to fix this problem so that it does not harm people and our planet.

Against this concerning backdrop we move that Harborough District Council:

1. Calls upon our residents of the District to minimise the use of plastics in everyday life.
2. Calls upon our officers to establish exactly what happens to our recycling plastic waste and where it ends up in the world, reporting this back to members.
3. Calls upon the Members of Parliament whose constituencies cover Harborough District to do all they can to stop the present practice of dumping our plastic waste on other Countries in the world.
4. Asks our Members of Parliament whose constituencies cover Harborough District to support our Common Objective to bring about change and ensure that UK plastic waste is processed in the UK.
5. Our officers are requested to communicate details of the views of Harborough District Council to Members of Parliament whose constituencies cover Harborough District and request a written acknowledgement and responses".

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

ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD (SAB) AND SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP (SCP)

The Council considered the reports of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) and Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP).

Harborough District Council is a partner of the Leicestershire and Rutland SAB and the SCP. Best practice guidance from the Local Government Association (LGA) is that one of the key 'must know' questions for District Council Members is to ask, 'if the Council formally considers the annual report of the safeguarding adults board, and does this identify issues for your council area?'.

It was moved by Councillor Dann, seconded by Councillor Dr Bremner and

RESOLVED that the annual reports of the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) and Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) be considered to increase awareness of issues relevant to the district.

Summary of Reasons

Harborough District Council has a legal duty to safeguard children, young people, and adults at risk of harm and consideration of the annual reports of the Leicestershire and Rutland SAB and SCP will help raise awareness of the local context.

URGENT ITEMS

There were none.

The Meeting ended at 8.17pm