

Leaders report for Council 15 July 2019

Harborough Innovation Centre

We are acutely aware of the important role businesses play in our district and we're delighted to see so many start-ups navigate their way successfully through their initial years. It is important that we continue to provide this important launch pad for emerging businesses in the district, but we recognise that the way existing occupants of Harborough Innovation Centre have been informed about the need to relocate could have been handled better.

We have taken immediate steps to make sure our existing occupants are given the support and flexibility they need to make the right choices for their business as they look to find more permanent premises and I would like to apologise for any concern our initial approach may have caused.

I have asked senior officers to meet with businesses at the Innovation Centre and a meeting has been arranged with the Chairman of the Innovation Centre board.

A Greener District

At the last Cabinet it was agreed that the Council should sign a new contract with Total Gas & Power Limited, to supply electricity for the Council from 1 October 2020. And with effect from 1 October 2019, the Council will be switching to use 'green energy' supplies. As well as getting value for money with this contract, the potential environmental benefits of this are clear and could build on our success in recent years of reducing our carbon emissions.

Plastic Free 'July'

This is a month-long campaign, led by the Plastic Free Foundation, to challenge millions of people around the globe to refuse single-use plastics and to make more sustainable choices in the way they live their life. As part of this campaign, and in an effort to encourage shoppers to bring a re-usable shopping bag for their market shopping, Harborough Market is giving away hundreds of re-usable shopping bags on **Saturday 20 July 2019** to any customer that spends more than £1.

Many of us individually, along with the Council corporately, have signed the Plastic Pledge earlier this year, so encouraging shoppers to make just one change and reuse a non-plastic bag or to refill a drinks bottle is a great way of supporting that pledge.

Shoppers can collect their re-usable shopping bag on **Saturday 20 July 2019** from 9am to 4pm with a £1 sale at any market stall (while stocks last).

Climate Change working group

Following discussions with the Monitoring officer I can confirm to Council that the Climate Change working group will operate as an Informal meeting to report comments to Council. This will be a 5 member politically balanced group with a membership: of 3 Conservative and 2 Liberal Democrats with a quorum of 3.

Terms of Reference:

Review the Climate Local Commitment Action Plan and report back to Council on the outcomes of the review;

The review will include but is not limited to the consideration of recycling, the use of plastics and investment in infrastructure and the role that the Council's procurement policy should play in achieving the Council's stated aim of making, as far as practicable, the Council's activities carbon neutral by 2030.

An officer working party will be established (to include the Regulatory Services Manager as lead officer) to report to the Climate Change Working Group and it is anticipated that an interim progress report will be made to Council before the end of 2019 with a final report before 30 June 2020.

Invest in Harborough

Despite a challenging economic climate nationally in recent years, and delay over Brexit, businesses of all sizes have continued to invest across Harborough district. From the new HQ for Joules, employing over 500 people, to Gazeley in Lutterworth investing tens of millions into new logistic centres. Harborough district is truly open for business and one of the top places to do business in the country, something which this Council is positively encouraging, from agri-research into the use of hemp plants to virtual reality headset and everything in between. Harborough District is open for business big or small.

Lutterworth High Street update

In the first phase of announcements last week from MHCLG we discovered that our bid for Lutterworth to the government's High Street Fund was not successful, but we have been encouraged to re-work our application and re-apply in the New Year for a further round.

All Change!

At the East Midlands Councils AGM, which I attended on 12 July, there was a presentation to members from Abeillio who will be taking over the East Midlands rail franchise from 00.01 on the 18 August. I'm sure that we will all wish everyone involved with this every success given the £53m invested in remodelling Market

Harborough station and track layout. I have asked officers to arrange for Abeillo to make a presentation to all councillors at a future meeting about their plans.

Volunteering success

The British Red Cross and Harborough District Council ran a joint event in the Commons Car Park in Market Harborough in June during National Volunteers Week. The aim of the event was to promote the British Red Cross Community Reserve Volunteer scheme.

Approximately 10 people said they were keen to volunteer – and more people are welcome to come forward if they are keen to lend a hand. A big thank-you to them all in anticipation.

The Community Reserve Volunteer scheme is designed for anyone, aged 18 or over, who wants to help their local community if a large incident occurs, but cannot commit to volunteering with the British Red Cross on a regular basis. Volunteers go onto a list of people who can be contacted in the event of an emergency to see if they're available to help out with filling sandbags, putting together food packages etc.

Developers told to abide by the rules

Following residents' reporting, developers across the Harborough district have been told to ensure they are respecting residents and planning rules – or face action.

Harborough District Council has contacted all development sites in the Harborough district urging that they adhere to all conditions set out as part of planning permissions – such as permitted working hours.

Council officers will be monitoring sites to ensure developers are complying with regulations. A recent inspection on a Sunday found 2 out of 25 sites active, these were immediately dealt with.

The move follows reports by residents in some areas that developers are working outside of permitted hours. The Council has also followed up reports of unauthorised signage put up by developers.

Classic show wows the crowds

Last Sunday 7 July, many of you like me will have enjoyed the Classic Car Show held in the centre of Market Harborough, along with thousands of visitors.

Over 200 vintage vehicles lined the streets in the town centre, along with live music, stalls and activities for all the family. Many local businesses were open and very busy. This show is organised by the District Council and I wish to say thank you to all

the staff and volunteers involved in organising this major event and ensuring that it was such a fantastic success.

Finally for those who are yet to go on their summer holidays, I wish you all a great time and see you in September if not before.

Cllr Phil King

Leader

12 July 2019