

Harborough District Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Council

On 20 May 2024 commencing at 6.30pm

At the Council Chamber, The Symington Building, Adam & Eve Street, Market Harborough

Councillors Present:	Anderson, Asher, Beadle, Bilbie, Birch, Burrell, Dann, Elliott, Finan, Forman, Gair, Galton, Grafton-Reed, Graves, Hallam, Hollick, James, Johnson, King, Knowles, Mahal, Modha, Nunn, Mrs Page, Rickman, Sarfas, Taylor, Whelband, Whitmore, Woodiwiss, Worrell.
Officers Present:	J. Richardson, L. Elliott, S. Baldwin, S. Manek, S. Hamilton, D. Atkinson, R. Jenner, C. Hartley, C. Mason

1. Presentation to the Harborough District Council Officers Team in the East Midlands Council Challenge

- 1.1. The Deputy Chief Executive introduced the East Midlands Council Annual Challenge, what was involved, how the HDC Team met and won this challenge. She congratulated the participants on their performance.
- 1.2. The Chairman acknowledged the participants and presented them with a certificate in recognition of their achievement in winning the East Midlands Council Challenge.

2. Chaplains Address

- 2.1. The Reverend Hils Cocoran offered a prayer and reflection.

3. Election of Chairman for the Year 2024/25

- 3.1. Nominations were invited for the election of Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year. It was **MOVED** by Councillor Galton and **SECONDED** by Councillor Burrell that Councillor Elliott be elected Chairman of the Council for the municipal year 2024 - 2025. There being no other nominations, it was therefore:

RESOLVED that Councillor Peter Elliott be elected Chairman of the Council for the 2023/24 year.

Councillor Johnson vacated the Chair.

Councillor P Elliott in the Chair

4. Investiture of Chairman and Declaration of Acceptance of Office

- 4.1. Councillor Elliott was presented with the Chain of Office. The Chairman read the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and signed.
- 4.2. The Chief Executive Officer counter-signed the Declaration of Acceptance.
- 4.3. The new Chairman thanked Councillors for the election.
- 4.4. The Badge of Office and a bouquet of flowers was presented to the retiring Chairman, Councillor Johnson.

5. Vote of thanks to retiring Chairman

- 5.1. A number of votes of thanks were given to the retiring Chairman, Councillor Johnson by Councillors Knowles, Nunn, and from the incoming Chairman, Councillor Elliott.

6. Response by retiring Chairman

- 6.1. Councillor Johnson gave a history of her interest and history with the Harborough District and thanked the councillors for their support over her term of office and particularly thanked her consort who could not be present. She thanked the Reverend Hills Cocoran for her support and the Democratic Services Team and presented both with a small gift. She also presented a painting to the new Chairman to be hung in the new Scraftoft Community Hub.

7. Appointment of Vice-Chairman for the year 2023/24

- 7.1. Nominations were invited for the election of the Vice Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year. It was **MOVED** by Councillor Anderson and **SECONDED** by Councillor Gair that Councillor James be elected Vice Chairman of the Council for the municipal year 2024 – 2025. There being no other nominations, it was therefore:

RESOLVED that Councillor Peter Elliott be elected Vice Chairman of the Council for the 2024/25 year.

Councillor Elliott made a declaration of acceptance of office in the prescribed form and assumed the Vice-Chair.

8. Investiture of Vice-Chairman and Declaration of Acceptance of Office

- 8.1. The Chairman invited the new Vice-Chairman to the lectern and presented the Vice Chairman with the Chain of Office.
- 8.2. The Vice-Chairman read the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and signed it.
- 8.3. The Chief Executive countersigned the Declaration.
- 8.4. The new Vice-Chairman thanked the Councillors for their election.

9. Chairmans Announcements

- 9.1. The Chairman invited the retiring Chair to present donations to her charities .
- 9.2. The retiring Chairman presented a cheque of donation to the representatives of the 'Living Without Abuse' Charity and the Leicestershire and Rutland Air Ambulance Service. She thanked the charities for their contribution to the community at large.
- 9.3. The Chairman congratulated the incoming Vice-Chairman on his appointment. He announced that his Chaplain duties would be undertaken by Father Martin of Scraftoft Parish Church. He also announced that he will hold a Civic Carol Service, Civic Service and Civic Dinner with dates to be confirmed and that any monies raised from civic events will be donated to local charity Rainbows Hospice for Children and Young People.

10. Review of the Constitution

- 10.1. The Leader, Councillor Knowles introduced the report. He brought Council's attention to the document provided and highlighted the recommendations made and explained that it would become evident in the coming year if the proposed reviews work for the Council.
- 10.2. Councillor King commented on the changes made to the constitution in respect of the removal of the Scrutiny Commission and Commissioner. He emphasised the importance of the Scrutiny function and how this needs to be irrefutable. He spoke on the two new scrutiny panels and proposed an

amendment to the wording at Article 6, page 54, point 2.6.4 of the Constitution, to read “will be chaired by a councillor of the main opposition group in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules.”

Council debated the amendment. The amendment was **MOVED** by Councillor King, **SECONDED** by Councillor Rickman. The amendment was **lost**.

10.3. Councillor Whelband proposed an amendment to the standing orders at point 5.3.12 on page 336, for the Planning Committee in that a recorded vote always be taken in decisions made in planning applications to strengthen and improve accountability. Council debated the amendment.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Whelband, **SECONDED** by Councillor King. The amendment was **lost**.

It was widely agreed that a report on this should be taken to the next Planning Committee and then the following Constitutional Review Committee for consideration. The Chief Executive agreed to look at how this could be done and the possible timelines for the report.

10.4. It was **MOVED** by Councillor Knowles, **SECONDED** by Councillor Beadle and

RESOLVED that Council:

- a. **Approve the refreshed Constitution at Appendix A and adopts the document with immediate effect.**
- b. **Note that prior to the first meeting of the Constitutional Review Committee in the new municipal year, the refreshed Constitution will be reviewed to ensure any best practice improvements are included by an independent Legal Firm specialising in Local Authority Constitutions. Calculation and application of Political Balance**

10.5. The Leader introduced the report and suggested Council follow the recommendations.

10.6. It was **MOVED** by Councillor Knowles, **SECONDED** by Councillor Graves and

RESOLVED that Council:

- (a) **Appoint the committees as shown in Section 3 to the report in accordance with the constitution and terms of reference therein;**
- (b) **Agree the calculation of political balance for the 2024-2025 municipal year, as set out in Section 3, Table 1 to the report;**
- (c) **Agree the allocation of seats on committees to groups in accordance with the political balance calculations as set out Section 3, Table 2 to the report.**
- (d) **Authorise the Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the relevant Group Leader, to determine any further necessary adjustments to be made to individual Committee and Sub-**

Committee allocations in accordance with the provisions of Sections 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989;

(e) Authorise the Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer to allocate seats to political groups in respect of any sub-committee which might be established from time to time in accordance with the provisions of Sections 15 and 16 of the 1989 Act.

11. Draft Rota of Meetings – 2024-2025

11.1. The Leader introduced the Draft Rota of Meetings for 2024/25. He confirmed that some dates had been amended as per discussions. Council discussed the number of full council meetings in the draft rota.

11.2. It was **MOVED** by Councillor Knowles and **SECONDED** by Councillor Graves and it was therefore;

RESOLVED that the Draft Rota of Meetings, June 2024 – May 2025 be adopted and implemented.

12. Appointment of Representatives on Outside Bodies

12.1. The Leader introduced the report and the recommendations. Council debated this report. It was highlighted that these bodies should be meaningful and meeting regularly to discuss items of business and that checks may need to be made to ensure these bodies are still functional and in place. Councillor King highlighted a number of strategic partnerships that are not mentioned in the report. He also highlighted that it would be helpful to have a clear list as to which outside bodies each ward member support. The Chief Executive agreed to take this suggestion away and look at doing this.

12.2. It was **MOVED** by Councillor Knowles, **SECONDED** by Councillor Graves and:

RESOLVED that nominations to the vacancies on Outside Bodies (which are not Executive appointments) be considered and appointments made; and,

In the absence of nominations, the Chief Executive be given delegated authority to fill the vacancies in consultation with the Political Group Leaders.

15. To Receive an Officers report on Waste Fleet Capital Funding Allocation

15.1 Councillor Woodiwiss introduced the report and highlighted the purpose of the report and recommendations. Council queried the details of the contracts outlined in the report. The Leader requested a briefing paper from Officers on

this with more detail for Members consideration. It was highlighted that items of business such as these should not be brought to Annual Council as it is a civic event and that the time it takes to accurately consider these reports and the decisions to be made cannot be adequately scrutinised and made at such events/meetings.

- 15.2 It was **MOVED** by Councillor Woodiwiss, **SECONDED** by Councillor Graves and it was therefore resolved that;

Council approve a gross and net capital allocation of £6.3m and £5m respectively during 2024/25 for the purchase of a fleet of refuse, recycling and food waste collection vehicles, road sweepers, grounds maintenance and sundry vehicles.

13. Appointment of the Monitoring Officer

- 16.1 The Leader introduced the recommendation including in the report and read these out to Council.

- 16.2 It was **MOVED** by Councillor King, **SECONDED** by Councillor Beadle and resolved that;

I. Council approve the appointment of the Monitoring Officer as outlined in the report, and as updated following on from the Members Appointment Panel recommendation.

II. Council approve Sarah Hamilton, Interim Senior Democratic Officer & Team Leader, be appointed as the Monitoring Officer on an interim basis with effect from 21st May 2024 until the new Monitoring Officer and Head of Democratic Services and Elections commences permanent employment with the Council.

III. Council note that the current interim Monitoring Officer, Julie Young, will vacate the post of Interim Monitoring Officer from 20th May 2024 on the approval of Sarah Hamilton being appointed by Council.

The meeting ended at 20:03pm.