

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF COUNCIL on

Monday 18 December 2023 commencing at 6.30 p.m (adjourned from 11 December 2023)

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

Present: Councillor Barbara Johnson (Chairman)

Councillors: Asher, Bannister, Bateman, Beadle (until 21.57), Bilbie, Birch, Burrell, Dann, Elliott, Finan, Forman, Gair, Galton, Grafton – Reed, Graves, Hallam, Hollick (until 21.56), James, King, Knight, Knowles, Mahal, Modha, Nunn, Mrs Page, Rickman, Sarfas, Taylor, Whelband, Whitmore, Woodiwiss and Worrell.

Officers present: J. Richardson, Liz Elliot, Clive Mason, D. Atkinson, T. Nelson
S. Hamilton, E. Newman

In attendance: D. Stebbings (Intelligent Plans and Examination Ltd)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Anderson and Mahal.

12. HARBOROUGH LOCAL PLAN – LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE OF COMMON GROUND RELATING TO HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT LAND NEEDS

Councillor Galton introduced the report and David Atkinson, Director of Planning, provided a presentation that provided information to Members regarding the importance and reasons and possible alternatives to agree the Local Plan.

Members were allotted time to consider the new recommendations that were proposed and distributed. All Councillors were allowed to speak and ask questions on the item.

Councillors Galton, Knowles and Bateman, King, Bannister, Page, Graves, Sarfas, Whelband, Rickman and Asher, Taylor, James, Finan and Dann spoke on the item.

Various questions, concerns and comments were made. Councillor Galton and Officers provided answers and explanations. Many of the Councillors thanked Planning Officers for all their hard work.

Councillor Knowles further explained the importance of the requirement to agree the Local Plan.

A recorded vote was proposed by Councillor Bateman and seconded by Councillor Knowles and it was **CARRIED**.

That Council **AGREED** to sign the Statement of Common Ground subject to the following:

1. If as part of Leicester City Council's local plan examination government appointed inspectors conclude more homes can be delivered and their unmet housing need drops significantly, then we would expect Harborough District's apportionment to drop pro-rata.

2. If future Government changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) mean Harborough District do not need to take any of Leicester City's unmet housing need to get our new Local Plan adopted, then we reserve the right to withdraw from this Statement of Common Ground.

3. If the impending release of the NPPF includes guarantees that the district will be protected from unwanted speculative development under the new planning system, whilst not increasing the current proposed housing target, then a further report will be brought back for Council's consideration.

The substantive motion with the further considerations was **CARRIED**. It was **RESOLVED** that the Council would sign the Statement of Common Ground.

A vote to **AGREE** the meeting could be extended to ensure all business was completed was **CARRIED**.

The recorded vote was 18 in favour and 14 against with no abstentions and as follows:

Councillors who voted in favour - Asher, Beadle, Birch, Burrell, Elliott, Finan, Forman, Gair, Galton, Graves, James, Johnson, Knight, Knowles, Sarfas, Taylor, Whitmore, and Woodiwiss.

Councillors who voted against - Bannister, Bateman, Bilbie, Dann, Grafton – Reed, Hallam, Hollick, King, Modha, Nunn, Mrs Page, Rickman, Whelband and Worrell.

13. LOCAL PLAN - ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION

Councillor Galton introduced the report and explained the reasons and importance for the recommendations.

All Councillors were allowed to speak and ask questions on the item.

Councillors Page, Bannister, Nunn, Rickman, King, James, Graves, and Sarfas all spoke on the item.

Various questions, concerns and comments were made. Councillor Galton and Officers provided answers and explanations were required.

The Council **AGREED** the recommendations in the report and it was **RESOLVED** that:

1. Council approve the New Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation document (Appendix A) for public consultation.
2. The Authority to make any factual corrections and minor changes to finalise the consultation document and facilitate the requirements of setting up consultation material as well as to make any changes agreed at Council be delegated to the Director of Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Planning.

14. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME UPDATE

Councillor Galton introduced the report and outlined the reasons and importance for the recommendations to be approved by Council. He also explained that by not agreeing the report key milestones and timeframes would not be met. There was also an addition safeguard that was shared to Councillors before the meeting.

All Councillors were allowed to speak and ask questions on the item.

Councillors Bannister, King, Sarfas, Graves, and Page spoke on the item.

Various questions, concerns and comments were made. Councillor Galton and Officers provided answers and explanations were required.

The Council **AGREED** to approve the revised Local Plan subject to the following:

If factors outside of our control result in the submission date being at risk, then representations will be made to the Department for Levelling up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and ministers to seek an extension of time to the current deadline of 30th June 2025.

The substantive motion with the further considerations was **CARRIED**. The Council **AGREED** the recommendations in the report, and it was **RESOLVED** that:

1. Council approves the revised Local Development Scheme, set out at Appendix A.

2. Delegates to the Director of Planning, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services and the Portfolio Holder for Planning, authority to:
 - (a) Commission, negotiate, award, enter into and vary such arrangements and legal agreements as may be necessary or appropriate to deliver the Local Development Scheme.
3. Delegate to the Director of Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, authority to:
 - (a) Keep the Local Development Scheme under review as necessary and appropriate.

15. NEW LOCAL PLAN RESOURCES

Councillor Graves introduced the report and outlined the reasons and importance for the recommendations to be approved by Council.

All Councillors were allowed to speak and ask questions on the item.

Councillors King, Bateman, Hallam, Bannister, Sarfas, Rickman, James, and Modha spoke on the item.

After concern on scrutinising this matter was raised, Officers confirmed that the performance and monitoring of the plan resources could go through scrutiny.

Councillor Knowles reiterated the importance of the requirement for Council to agree this report.

The Council **AGREED** to approve the additional resources needed for Local Plan subject to the following:

Where opportunities present themselves to minimise the use of resources through the plan-making process such as deadlines being extended or joint work with other local authorities then these will be implemented.

The substantive motion with the further considerations was **CARRIED**. The Council **AGREED** the recommendations in the report, and it was **RESOLVED** that Council approves the additional resources needed for Local Plan preparation set out in Table 1 in paragraph 4.4 of this report in order to aim to submit the new local plan for examination by June 2025.

Councillor Beadle and Hallam left the meeting at 21:55.

17. CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING MOTIONS:

A. Harborough District Council Divestment

Councillor Woodiwiss proposed the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Knight.

It stated that this Council commits to:

1. Harborough District Council, as a member of the Leicestershire Local Government Pension Scheme, will call for it to review its Investment Strategy, and review its Net Zero Climate strategy to rule out new investments in fossil fuel producing companies.
2. Harborough District Council, as a member of the Leicestershire Local Government Pension Scheme, will call for divestment from fossil fuels through the development and adoption of responsible investment policies which:
 - a. Immediately freeze any new investment in the top 200 publicly-traded fossil fuel companies.^[3]
 - b. Divest from direct ownership, and any commingled Funds that include fossil fuel public equities and corporate bonds within 3 to 4 years.
 - c. Actively seek to invest in companies that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and minimise climate risk.
3. Recognising that fossil fuel investments should be considered as part of the council's "carbon footprint" and divesting by the pension Scheme is one of the most impactful steps we can take to reduce our impact on our community and the world.

Footnotes:

[1] *Energy Investing: Exploring Risk and Return in the Capital Markets*, Joint Report by the International Energy Agency and the Centre for Climate Finance & Investment, Paris. Available at: <https://www.iea.org/reports/energy-investing-exploring-risk-and-return-in-the-capital-markets>

[2] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-50868717>

[2] As determined by the most recent Carbon Underground 200 list published by Fossil Free Indexes: <https://www.ffisolutions.com/research-analytics-index-solutions/research-screening/the-carbon-underground-200/>

A recorded voted was proposed by Councillor Woodiwiss and seconded by Councillor Knight and it was **CARRIED**.

The motion was debated and put to the vote and was **CARRIED**.

The recorded vote was 22 in favour and 1 against with 7 abstentions and as follows:

Councillors who voted in favour - Asher, Bannister, Bilbie, Birch, Burrell, Elliott, Finan, Forman, Gair, Galton, Grafton – Reed, Graves, Johnson, Knight, Knowles, Modha, Nunn, Sarfas, Taylor, Whitmore, Woodiwiss and Worrell.

Councillors who voted against - Whelband

Councillors who abstained - Bateman, Dann, Hallam, James, King, Mrs Page, and Rickman.

B. Proportional Representation

Due to the apologies of the seconder of the motion, Councillor Anderson, the Chairman announced that consideration of this item would be deferred to the next Council meeting on 26 February 2024.

C. Local Plan Advisory Panel

Councillor Bannister proposed the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Bateman.

It is proposed that a Resolution be passed by the Council that:-

1. The Council publish all Agendas and supporting papers in advance of every Local Plan Advisory Panel meeting for Members and the public may have access to them.
2. That the Local Plan Advisory Panel meetings may be accessed online as well as in person (a hybrid meeting).
3. That all future Local Plan Advisory Panel meetings are to be held in public.

The motion was debated and put to the vote and was **CARRIED**.

The meeting ended 22:14