



Council

To All Members of the Council on Friday, 27 September 2024

Date of meeting: Monday, 07 October 2024

Time: 18:30

**Venue: Council Chamber
Council Offices, Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough.**

Members of the public can access a live broadcast of the meeting from the [Council website](#), and the meeting webpage. The meeting will also be open to the public.

Dear Councillor

A Meeting of the Harborough District Council, which you are invited to attend, is to be held as detailed above.

The business to be transacted is set out in the Agenda below.

Yours faithfully

JOHN RICHARDSON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE
HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

Agenda

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 Chairman's Announcements**
- 3 Declarations of Members' Interests**
- 4 DRAFT Council minutes - 29 July 2024 3 - 12**
- 5 Leader's Report**
To Follow
- 6 Questions from the Public**

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Circulate to: **All Councillors**



HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL on

Monday 31 July 2024 commencing at 6.30 p.m.

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

Present:

Councillor Elliott (Chairman)

Councillors: Anderson, Asher, Bannister, Bateman, Beadle, Bilbie, Birch, Burrell, Dann, Finan, Gair, Galton, Graves, Hallam, James, Johnson, King, Knight, Knowles, Mahal, Modha, Mrs Page, Rickman, Sarfas, Taylor, Whelband, Whitmore, Woodiwiss, Worrell.

Apologies: Councillors Forman, Grafton-Reed, Hollick and Nunn.

Officers present: D. Atkinson, L. Elliott, S. Hamilton, C. Hartley, S. Manek, C. Mason and E. Newman

J. Richardson- Chief Executive Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Forman, Grafton-Reed, Hollick and Nunn.

2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Since being elected as Chair on the 20th of May, the Chairman judged the floats for the Harborough Carnival, attended the Harborough Twenty 12 Lions Community Awards Evening, and the Oadby and Wigston's Lions Club Bardi concert at De Montfort Hall. The Chairman attended a meeting with the Lord Lieutenant, and other civic heads from Leicestershire as an opportunity to get to know each other and to share priorities for the current municipal year. The Harborough D-Day flag raising event was attended together with the Service of Commemoration and Remembrance at St Dionysius Church. The Chairman visited the Community Arts wall and "chair arts", Hallaton Museum for the launch of their replica Roman Helmet and attended the Judging of East Midlands in Bloom and met with the wonderful Harborough in

Bloom volunteers. The Chairman attended the classic car show in Market Harborough, visited the Well Charity in Kibworth Beauchamp and attended the High Sheriff's Osprey Cruise in aid of charity Warning Zone at Rutland water.

The Chairman had been supported by the Vice Chair, Cllr James.

3. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest received.

4. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL 26.02.2024

In respect of the ordinary meeting of the Council on 26 February 2024 it was :-

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held in the 26 February 2024 be received and adopted, subject to the amendments below:

- **Cllr Bateman is not a County Councillor, as detailed in the item on Declarations of Interest.**
- **All the Councillors in attendance at the meeting had not been recorded.**

5. REPORT OF THE LEADER

The Leader presented his report.

Firstly, the Leader informed Council that he had written to the new Prime Minister to request that he calls in the decision by the previous Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, to allow the new prison at Gartree to be built. The Leader confirmed that no response had yet been received and a follow up would be sent. The Leader had requested that Ministers would attend to visit the site.

ACTION: Officers to follow up on response from Prime Minister's Office.

The Annual Statement of Achievements for 2023/24 had been shared with Members at Cabinet in July and had been shared again. The Leader thanked Officers for their ongoing dedication and commitment to work. The Council had also published its Productivity Plan.

The Council had invited a Corporate Peer Challenge which would take place in the Autumn.

The Cultural Quarter had reached completion. More eye-catching signage had been added on buildings and shop windows and more waste bins had been installed. The Leader thanked Officers.

The Open Spaces Policy was being reviewed after agreement at Cabinet in July 2024. There would be involvement of Parish and Town Councils in the review which could see the district council stepping in if a Parish or Town Council did not want to adopt an area in Market Harborough, where there was no town council.

The Leader highlighted a few points from the Annual Statement of Achievements. These were as follows:

- 6 million capital investment into the two leisure centres in Market Harborough and Lutterworth.
- A new Housing and Homelessness Strategy had been approved.
- A new Leisure Strategy had been approved to help enhance locality provision.
- New solar panels would be placed on Harborough Innovation Centre, reducing emissions by 16 tonnes of CO2.
- Going ahead with Friendship Park.
- £100K put into the Youth Opportunity Plan delivery including development of a Harborough Youth Council to allow the voice of young people to be heard.
- £1 put into a Town & Parish Council Community Fund, specially created to support local projects across the district and employing two Grants Officers to support parishes in completing the community applications.

Comments on the Leader's Report

Councillor Whelband commented that he did not see much change at the Cultural Quarter except for a few new stickers and one planter. He asked if businesses and residents had been consulted for their thoughts.

Councillor Bateman thanked the Leader for the report and asked if the Opposition would be involved in the Corporate Peer Challenge.

Councillor Mrs Page asked more about the Town and Parish Council Community Fund and when this would come forward. She was happy to see the Cultural Quarter completion. Councillor Mrs Page asked when completion was for Plowmans Yard and why the Market Harborough plans had completed before the Lutterworth plan.

Councillor Bannister asked for reassurance from the Leader that residents would be assisted when open spaces were brought back to standard.

Councillor James had made an observation at the Cultural Quarter that the six seats there were very dirty and needed cleaning. He thanked Councillors and Officers for the work carried out at the Friendship Park.

ACTION: Officers to action cleaning of seats



Councillor King commented that some of the achievements had been achieved because of the previous administration. Councillor King commented on the secured funding across Leicestershire for EV Charging infrastructure with HDC leading the Flex D programme. He commented that there needed to be a clear line of sight of how Members were going to be involved in the Corporate Peer Challenge and that there was some indirect cost to the Council. Councillor King commented that the previous scheme for the management of open spaces had not been affordable, so expectations needed to be managed. Councillor King asked why more Planning Officers were being appointed even though there was not sufficient income being generated and commented on the recent news on the terrible treatment of young people, police officers, and Members of the Armed Forces.

Councillor Rickman thanked the Leader for the early report. He asked when the parish and town councils would be allocated the £40k and how this would make the rural areas feel more valued.

Members were also given the opportunity to ask questions that were not related to the report.

The Leader provided a response to each of these queries and comments.

6. QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE PUBLIC

No questions were received.

7. PETITIONS SUBMITTED BY THE PUBLIC

No petitions were received.

8. QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FROM MEMBERS

The following question was submitted by Councillor Bannister to Councillor Mark Graves, Cabinet Member for Finance:

“Will the Cabinet member for Finance agree that during the previous Conservative administration at Harborough District Council all Business rates were collected properly, and financial contingencies were prudently put in place in the event of unforeseen Business failures for which the Council would have no control over?”

Councillor Graves **responded** that:

“Thank you, Cllr Bannister, for your question. I cannot give an opinion either way about whether, under the previous administration, all the Councils business rates were collected properly and if financial contingencies were prudently put in place in the event of unforeseen business failures. The reason for this is because I have not

asked the Council's s.151 officer to look into this specific issue. However, I trust the officers at the time duly administered and reported any such under recovery of business rates in the usual way, including reporting any writing offs to Cabinet and the setting of appropriate bad debt provisions”.

The following question was submitted by Councillor Mrs Page to the Leader:

“For transparency and to ensure all members and the public are aware, could this Council please receive a timetable and a detailed up-date of the progress made to deliver the Lutterworth Masterplan.”

The Leader **responded** that:

“We have received six tenders for the procurement of a project manager. The inception meeting with the successful applicant is scheduled for the week commencing 29th July.

The next steps involve procuring the principal designer and the design and build contractor. They will utilise the concept plans and incorporate feedback from the consultation workshops and online submissions to collaboratively determine financial feasibility. We anticipate holding a stand-alone meeting with Lutterworth Town Council and relevant members in early September to present the final design.

Additionally, a meeting is scheduled with LCC during the week commencing 29th July to discuss proposed new elements of the Traffic Regulation Order for the Section 278 agreement. This includes additional car parking on Station Road, new disabled bays, and 30-minute waiting limit spaces.

As outlined in the detailed timetable, attached, we are on schedule and committed to ensuring the process is thorough and accurate. Importantly, we are maintaining close partnership with Highways throughout this process”.

The supplementary questions were responded to by Councillor Mark Graves and a written response would be supplied by the Section 151 Officer for Councillor Mrs Page’s supplementary question.

ACTION: Section 151 Officer to respond on the monies received from the sale of the Lutterworth Town Square project.

9. REPORT FROM THE CABINET

The Leader introduced the report. He highlighted the main points of the report.

Council discussed the subject matter presented in the report and asked for clarification on certain points. The Leader responded.

Councillor Bilbie requested information on the Council funding of VCS Organisations.

ACTION: Section 151 Officer to respond.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:
Council receive and note the report.

10. REPORT ON COMMITTEES

The Leader presented the report.

Councillor Sarfas requested information of what provisions were in place for voluntary sports at leisure clubs and societies for people with disabilities.

ACTION: Officers to provide response.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:
Council receive and note the report.

11. REPORT ON JOINT ARRANGEMENTS

The Leader presented this report. He gave an update on arrangements since the last meeting. The Council had established a joint committee for the purpose of administering it's revenues and benefits functions. The joint committee included North West Leicestershire District Council and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, as well as Harborough District Council. It met 4 times a year and the Council had nominated Councillor Graves and Councillor Beadle as its representatives. The Joint Committee was also attended by the Head of Financial Services, Carolyn Bland.

Councillor Mrs Page commented that she was a Member of the A5 Partnership.

ACTION: Further information required on the A5 Partnership and a response provided to Cllr Mrs Page.

Councillor King asked when Council would see the reports for the MAG meetings and he was informed that the Chairman preferred for these meeting to be kept confidential.

ACTION: Inform Members of when MAG meetings are taking place.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:
Council noted the joint arrangements activity since the last meeting.

12. NOTICES OF MOTION

One Notice of Motion, had been received by the Council and accepted in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules.

Councillor King **proposed** the Motion and Councillor Mrs Page **Seconded**:

“Since the emerging local plan Regulation 18 consultation process ended in February 2024, a new government has been elected.

In their first week, they have stated that mandatory minimum housing targets are to be re-imposed on Local Planning Authorities, along with many other changes to NPPF.

At Reg18 this administration consulted on a 29% increase of minimum housing delivery of 16,556, for 2020-2041 versus the current 2011-2031 adopted local plan of 12,800.

But the new Chancellor of the Exchequer has stated that their 5-year minimum target for housing will be 50% more than that of the last government, 1.5 million.

Previously, Harborough has had protection from onshore wind turbine applications But now we have the news that the new Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, has decided to immediately remove the NPPF restrictions for on shore wind turbines.

From the briefings Councillors have received, hundreds of local residents visited the 5 drop-in consultation events, but very few submitted responses to the Reg 18 consultation.

Much vital evidence and technical information, is yet to be brought forward for evaluation and consideration.

And important issues are yet to be agreed with adjoining authorities or indeed by this one.

The risks to our local plan making are now greatly increased, because of these changes and increased uncertainties.

There are delays in evidence gathering and a lack of time being afforded for evaluation and appraisal by elected members, local residents, and businesses.

The present timetable of publication of draft Reg19 in Nov/Dec this year is now very unlikely to be met.

We therefore propose the following recommendation: -

1. The Council, immediately ‘pauses’ the emerging Local Plan process, whilst it seeks clarifications from the new government of its housing targets, and other changes to planning frameworks etc.

The Leader proposed an amendment to the substantive motion and this was seconded by Councillor Galton. The proposed amendment to the recommendation was circulated to Council. The amendment read as follows:

Our officers have a number of major concerns with any move to implement a further delay to the local plan making process. The major concerns include: potential financial impacts on the Council's budget, the risk of having no defensible local plan leading to a potential for a developers free for all and further unwanted speculative development. New government policy on housing delivery has not yet been released although we are expecting an announcement on the new NPPF imminently.

It would be completely irrational to pause momentum on Local Plan preparation at the current time. Whatever happens moving forward the Harborough District needs a new local plan as quickly as possible to ensure development is delivered in a planned and not a speculative developer-led way. Indeed, we are seeking to prepare this new local plan as speedily as possible.

Rather than HDC instigating a pause, leading to a possible waste of public money and the risk of missing the current submission deadline, we move the following;

1. As soon as government announcements materialise our officers be asked to prepare an urgent analysis of the impact of any changes.
2. Once that is available and depending on the levels of any potential impact then either an all member in-person briefing, a special cabinet, or special full council be called.

It is sensible and pragmatic to keep our options open until we understand the significance of any changes. This approach allows us the flexibility to react without unnecessarily jeopardising our progress so far.

The decision on which meeting option is most appropriate be delegated to the CEO and The Leader. Before the decision is made the Leader will consult with the Cabinet Lead for Planning, Cabinet and the Leader of the Opposition.

Notwithstanding the above assessment and subsequent briefing of members and future decision making on this matter, it is considered that our officers should begin to lobby government for an extension to the June 30th, 2025, deadline for the submission of our new local plan for examination. This will be especially important if higher new home building targets are imposed by government and therefore additional work to prepare the plan may be needed."

A recorded vote was taken on the amendment to become the substantive motion which was supported by the requisite number of Councillors and the result was:

For the motion: Cllrs Anderson, Beadle, Birch, Burrell, Elliott, Finan, Gair, Galton, Graves, James, Johnson, Knight, Knowles, Sarfas, Taylor, Whitmore, and Woodiwiss (17)

Against the motion: Cllrs Bannister, Bateman, Bilbie, Dann, Hallam, King, Mahal, Modha, Mrs Page, Rickman, Whelband and Worrell (12)

There were no abstentions.

The amendment to the motion was therefore **CARRIED** and subsequently became the substantive motion.

Councillor Anderson left the meeting at 8pm.

A subsequent debate then took place on the substantive motion and the Leader and Officers provided responses to each of these queries and comments.

The motion was **proposed** by Councillor Knowles and **seconded** by Councillor Galton. A vote was taken, and the motion was **CARRIED** that the amendment be **APPROVED**.

13. GREAT EASTON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Councillor Galton presented the report and set out the main highlights to Council including that Great Easton was one of 63 designated conservation areas within the Harborough District. These conservation areas were last appraised between 2005 and 2007. As such, a programme of appraisal has been put in place to ensure the conservation areas remain up-to-date and supported by appropriate appraisals. Due to the high number of conservation areas this is an on-going programme of work.

ACTION: Councillor King requested a list of the programme of works for the conservation areas.

Councillor Galton **proposed** the motion, and it was **seconded** by Councillor Rickman.

The proposal was **CARRIED**, and it was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

Council adopt the revised Great Easton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, set out at Appendix A of the report.

14. ADDITIONS TO THE LOCAL LIST OF NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Councillor Galton presented the report and set out the main highlights to Council including the adoption of eight new entries for inclusion on the Local List of Non-Designated Heritage Assets.

Councillor Sarfas asked if the Old Police Station, which was a listed building was being restored back to its original state.

Councillor James asked about designation of assets and a strategy for former banks.

Councillor Galton **proposed** the motion, and it was **seconded** by Councillor Woodiwiss.

The proposal was **CARRIED**, and it was therefore **RESOLVED that:**

Council adopt the addition of the eight new entries to the Local List of Non-Designated Heritage Assets.

URGENT ITEMS

There were none.

The Meeting closed at 8:32pm.

Council 7th October 2024

Item 8 refers

Questions submitted by Members

1. Question to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Knowles

Submitted by Cllr Bateman

Question:

Is the Leader aware that 8th May 2025 is the 80th Anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day, and if so, can he assure members that this Authority will offer financial assistance to any of the District's parishes and Towns to assist them in ensuring this important anniversary is marked in a manner befitting its importance in our Country's history?

2. Question to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Knowles

Submitted by Cllr James

Question:

The UK produces more plastic waste per person than almost any other country in the world so what happens to it? The UK is dumping our waste on other counties. Presently most is going to Turkey and Malaysia where often it is set on fire which is certainly damaging the health of people living nearby. The alternative is to dump it in the oceans.

The destinations of Single Use Plastics following the recycling collection service operated by Harborough District Council.

Leicestershire use Casepak together their partner Oceala to process plastic waste that is collected in Leicestershire and it seems that these plastics are being transported across the world to: "the Far East and Asia to get the best prices".

Can the Council Leader please tell me:

1. Is any of Harborough Districts Plastic Waste being exported to Asia?
2. Which countries are receiving it?

3. Approximate annual tonnage being exported
4. Is any of it being burned and/or dumped in the worlds oceans?

**3. Question to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Knowles
Submitted by Cllr Sarfas**

Question:

The Councils Green Waste Collection Service - Methods of Payment

Several of my residents have recently contacted me regarding this service. It seems that some residents cannot book to continue this service on line in which case they have to wait in a phone queue. Many residents assume that their subscription will auto renew at the beginning of the collection season and wait and wait for a collection that does not happen. Thereby missing out on the full service.

Can the Council Leader please investigate to see if an auto renewal of subscriptions option can be put in place for 2025?

This would provide a better service to our regular users and save the customer service staff a considerable amount of time and also improve our customer service to residents.

Harborough District Council



Report to Council Meeting of 7 October 2024

Title:	Report from the Cabinet
Status:	Public
Report Author:	Senior Democratic Officer – Naomi Kwasa, n.kwasa@harborough.gov.uk
Lead Councillor:	Leader of the Cabinet – Councillor Knowles
Appendices:	Appendix A – decisions taken by Cabinet since the last meeting of the Council

Summary

This report provides information to the Council on issues considered by the Cabinet at its meetings since the last meeting of the Council.

Recommendations

1. That Council receive the report.

Reasons for Recommendations

Producing a formal report of the decisions taken by Cabinet since the last meeting of the Council affords all Members of the Council a further opportunity to ask questions of the Cabinet as to the activity undertaken.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides Council with a summary of the matters considered by Cabinet since the last meeting of the Council. It allows Members to ask questions of Cabinet Members about that business.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council operates a Leader and Cabinet model of governance, which means that the majority of functions are delegated to the Leader and their Cabinet. It is therefore important that Council is formally appraised of decisions which the Cabinet has taken.

3. Details

- 3.1 Since the last meeting of Council on 29 July 2024, the Cabinet has held one meeting on 9 September 2024 at which the decisions set out at Appendix A were taken.
- 3.2 No urgent decisions have been made by the Leader since the last meeting of Council.
- 3.3 No executive decisions have been taken by individual portfolio holders.

4. Implications of Decisions

Corporate Priorities

- 4.1. The Council is committed to delivering its corporate priorities as set out in its corporate plan. Providing the information contained within this report gives assurance that the Council continues to work to deliver these priorities.

Consultation

- 4.2. The report provides information to Council only - no consultation is required.

Financial

- 4.3. This report does not have any direct financial consequences upon the budget set by the Council. The financial implications for each individual Cabinet report are shown in the respective report.

Legal

- 4.4. This report ensures that the Council is meeting its legal obligations to ensure that members are aware of Cabinet activity.

Environment Implications

- 4.5. This update report does not impact upon the Council's commitment to achieving net zero carbon.

Risk Management

- 4.6. The contents of this report do not pose any risk implications for the Council as it is an update report.

Equalities Impact

- 4.7. This report, providing an update only, does not engage the public sector equality duty.

Data Protection

- 4.8. This report contains no private information.

5. Recommendation

5.1. Council is invited to receive the report.

6. Background papers

6.1. None.





	Decision	Summary of Reasons
9 September 2024		
2024/25 Performance Report – Financial (Outturn) and Corporate Performance Quarter 1 (Year ending 31 March 2025)	<p>RESOLVED That Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considered and commented on the contents of the report and associated appendices. • approved the establishment of a new sub-reserve titled “NPPF Support”. • approved the allocation of £400k to the NPPF Support sub-reserve. 	<p>The Council’s Performance Management Framework requires that both Scrutiny and the Cabinet have a role in monitoring the performance of the Council against its Corporate Plan. Good financial governance requires the Cabinet to consider and comment on financial outturn. Such commentary demonstrates to customers, partners, and stakeholders that the Council is actively considering the environment within which the Council is operating.</p>
Bad Debt Write Offs (Revenues and Benefits)	<p>RESOLVED That the total amounts for National Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates) £169,193.52 as listed in Appendix A be written off.</p>	<p>All reasonable steps to recover the debt have been taken, and therefore where write off is recommended it is the only course of action that is left available.</p>
Community Awards	<p>RESOLVED;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Cabinet approved the establishment of an annual Community Awards event, and the Director of Community and Wellbeing is given delegated powers to make decisions required to ensure the event is delivered in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Wellbeing. 2. That Cabinet approved a budget of £5,000 for 2024/25 for expenditure associated with the first annual Community Awards event, to be funded from the Lotto Reserve. 3. Funding for subsequent years expenditure to be taken from sponsorship and the Lotto Reserve. 	<p>To enable an annual Community Awards event to take place this year and in future years.</p>



<p>Planning Enforcement Policy 2024-2027</p>	<p>RESOLVED that Cabinet, having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF) agrees to adopt the Planning Enforcement Policy 2024-2027 (PEP) as set out in Appendix A of this report, replacing the Council’s existing Local Enforcement Plan document of April 2018.</p>	<p>i. The National Planning Policy Framework revised December 2023 states at paragraph 59 that “Local planning authorities should consider publishing a Local Enforcement Plan to manage enforcement proactively, in a way that is appropriate to their area. This should set out how they will monitor the implementation of planning permissions, investigate alleged cases of unauthorised development, and take action where it is appropriate to do so”.</p> <p>ii. The revised PEP does not seek to create new ways of working for the Council, but to set down in one place, in a clear and concise way, the practices which the Council’s planning enforcement service currently adopt, which follow national planning guidance for planning enforcement.</p> <p>iii. The revised PEP should be read in conjunction with the Council’s General Enforcement Policy</p>
<p>Market Harborough Special Expenses Advisory Panel Minutes</p>	<p>RESOLVED;</p> <p>1. That Cabinet noted the minutes of the Market Harborough Special Expenses Advisory Panel held on the 23rd July.</p> <p>2. That Cabinet approved the naming of the new Northampton Road Pocket Park as the Northampton Road Friendship Park.</p>	<p>ii. To enable the minutes to be signed.</p> <p>iii. To enable the new pocket park to be formally named.</p>



<p>Environmental Services Fleet Procurement</p>	<p>RESOLVED;</p> <p>1. That Cabinet note the procurement work underway to procure a new fleet of Environmental Services vehicles.</p> <p>2. That Cabinet granted delegation for the award of contract for the fleet purchase to the Director of Finance (S151), in consultation with Cllr Graves (Portfolio Holder for Finance) and Cllr Woodiwiss (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change); subject to the final contract price being within the allocated capital budget.</p>	<p>To enable the purchase of a fleet of Environmental Services vehicles in a timely manner.</p>
<p>Environmental Services Contract Extension 2025-2027</p>	<p>RESOLVED That Cabinet:</p> <p>1. Extend the Environmental Services Contract with FCC Environmental UK to 31 March 2027.</p> <p>2. Delegate to the Director of Communities and Wellbeing, following consultation with the Director of Resources (& S151), the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change authority to finalise the final price of the two-year extension to 31 March 2027.</p> <p>3. Delegate to the Director of Communities and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services and the Cabinet Members for Finance and Environment and Climate Change, authority to negotiate, award, enter into and vary such legal agreements as may be necessary or appropriate to extend the Environmental Services Contract</p>	<p>iii. The current contract is due to finish at the 31st March 2025.</p> <p>iv. To continue the operational delivery of the Waste management, Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance Services. which is a statutory requirement.</p>



Harborough District Council - Decisions taken by the Cabinet from August - September 2024

Note: this decision list is for guidance only. The text of the minutes, which may be different is definitive.

Harborough District Council



Report to Council Meeting of 7th October 2024

Title:	Update from the following Committees and Panels since the last Council meeting on 29 July 2024
Status:	Public
Report Author:	Naomi Kwasa, Senior Democratic Officer n.kwasa@harborough.gov.uk
Lead Councillor:	Leader of the Council, Councillor Phil Knowles
Appendices:	Appendix A – Minutes of the Cabinet Sub Committee Grants 11 th September 2024 Appendix B - Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee 31 st July 2024 – to follow Appendix C - Minutes of the Employment Committee 5 th September 2024 Appendix D - Minutes of the Services and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel 31 st August 2024 – to follow

Summary

This report summarises the activities of the various Committees and Panels that have met since the last meeting of Council on 29 July 2024.

Recommendations

1. That Council note the report.

Reasons for Recommendations

The Council Procedure Rules include the provision for Council, at an ordinary meeting, to receive reports from committees and receive questions and answers on those reports.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report provides an update for Council on the activities of committee and panels which have met since the last meeting of Council.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Council's constitution provides at 4.1.15.11.2 that ordinary meetings of Council will "*receive reports from the Council's Committees and receive questions and answers on those reports.*" It is likely that the rationale behind this requirement is as a result of there sometimes being long periods of time between meetings of committees, which means that minutes are not approved and published for councillors who were not in attendance to review and ask questions about. By providing an update report and allowing Councillors to ask questions of the Committee and Panel Chairs in full Council, the Council ensures that there is timely oversight of the valuable democratic activity taking place within the Council.

3. Details

Executive Functions

- 3.1. The Cabinet Sub-Committee Grants met on 11th September 2024 and considered four grant applications. The minutes of this Panel are contained in Appendix A of this report.

Non-Executive Functions

- 3.2. The Audit and Standards Committee met on 31st July 2024 and considered the following reports; External Audit - Harborough District Council Audit Plan for year ending 31 March 2024, Internal Audit – Progress and Performance Update, Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion 2023-24 and Global Internal Audit Standards. The minutes are marked to follow.
- 3.3. The Employment Committee met on 5th September 2024 and considered a report on Pensions Discretions Policy Amendments. The minutes are included in Appendix C of this report.
- 3.4. The Constitutional Review Committee will be meeting on 3rd October 2024 and will consider a report on Voting Process at Planning Committee.

Overview and Scrutiny Functions

- 3.5. The Services and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel met on 31st August 2024 and considered a Call-in request of the Cabinet decision (15 July 2024) on the "Criteria and allocations for £1m Community Grants Fund to Parish and Town Councils report". The minutes are marked to follow.
- 3.6. The Corporate and Performance Overview & Scrutiny Panel meeting met on 26th September 2024 and considered the following reports; Q1 2024.25 - Finance & Corporate Performance Report and Equality Plan 2025-28.

4. Implications of Decisions

Corporate Priorities

- 4.1. The Council is committed to delivering its corporate priorities as set out in its corporate plan. Providing the information contained within this report gives assurance that the Council continues to work to deliver these priorities.

Consultation

- 4.2. This report reflects the activity of the committees, which all members were entitled to attend. No further consultation is required.

Financial

- 4.3. This report provides an update on the work of the committees and has no financial consequences for the budget set by the Council.

Legal

- 4.4. This report provides an update on the work of the committees and ensures the committees comply with the requirement to report their activity to Council as set out in the Council Procedure Rules.

Environment Implications

- 4.5. This update report does not impact upon the Council's commitment to achieving net zero carbon.

Risk Management

- 4.6. The contents of this report do not pose any risk implications for the Council as it provides an update on the work of a committee.

Equalities Impact

- 4.7. The Council has a statutory duty to consider and demonstrate equalities impact in all of its activities. However, the report does not directly impact upon the public sector equality duty given it reports the activities of a committee.

Data Protection

- 4.8. This report contains no private information.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1. Council is invited to note the democratic activity since the last meeting of Council as set out in this report.

6. Background papers

- 6.1. None



HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes Of The Meeting Of The

Cabinet Sub Committee Grants

Held at The Council Chamber

The Symington Building, Adam and Eve Street, LE16 7AG

On Wednesday, 11 September 2024

Commencing at 18:30

Present: Councillor Phil Knowles, Councillor Jim Knight

Officers:

Rachael Felts - Head of Customer Services and Community Partnerships

Steven Taylor - Health and Wellbeing Manager

Krupa Sudera - Senior S106 Obligations Monitoring Officer

Katie Fox - Grants Administrator

Naomi Kwasa - Senior Democratic Officer and Team Leader

Election of Chairman for 2024/25

It was AGREED that the Election of the Chairman for the Cabinet Sub Committee Grants 2024/25 was not required as the Leader of the Council was present and therefore he must preside over a sub committee as noted in the Council's Constitution 4.4.21 of the Executive Procedure Rules.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Woodiwiss and Councillor Galton, who was substituted by Councillor Knight.

Declarations of Members' Interests

There were none.

Cabinet Sub-Committee Grants- DRAFT minutes 10 April 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Sub Committee Grants held on 10th April 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

Cabinet Sub-Committee Grants Report 11th September 2024

Officers presented the report which detailed the recommendations on funding allocations for Section 106 grants, to the Cabinet Sub-Committee Grants for approval. Four applications were considered as follows;

- **004 S106 R2 2024/25 - Bowmen of Glen Archery Society**

The Chairman invited the applicants and Ward Member, Councillor Hallam, to address the Sub Committee and representations were heard in support of the application. Following the discussion it was;

RESOLVED that full funding of £147,160.15 be granted with the following terms and conditions;

- **Standard Terms and Conditions would apply (this includes requiring the evidence of other funding)**
- **Impose a Community Use Agreement**
- **Impose a deadline for the clubhouse to be completed as the toilets/kitchen etc are important to be in place for when the space is used for community use**

The Chairman confirmed that the next three applications would be considered together. The Chairman invited the applicant for 005 – Lutterworth Athletic Football Club to address the Sub Committee and a representation was heard in support of the application.

- **007 S106 R2 2024/25 – Lutterworth Town Council (Town Council office project)**

It was **AGREED** that the application 007 S106 R2 2024/25 – Lutterworth Town Council (Town Council office project) would not be funded as per the officer recommendations. The Chairman asked officers to liaise with the applicant to point them in the direction of other funding streams.

- **005 S106 R2 2024/25 - Lutterworth Athletic Football Club**
- **008 S106 R2 2024/25 – Lutterworth Town Council (Pavilion project)**

The Sub Committee discussed the benefits of part-funding both the remaining applications equally and asked officers to engage with the applicants to determine other funding streams that may be available. It was therefore;

RESOLVED that;

- Part funding of £45,780 be granted to 005 S106 R2 2024/25 - Lutterworth Athletic Football Club with the following terms and conditions;**
- Standard Terms and Conditions would apply (this includes requiring the evidence of other funding)**
- Impose extra monitoring following completion to ensure community access.**

And,

- Part funding of £45,780 be granted to 008 S106 R2 2024/25 – Lutterworth Town Council (Pavilion project) with the following terms and conditions;**
- Standard Terms and Conditions would apply (this includes requiring the evidence of other funding)**
- Impose additional monitoring after completion to ensure community have fair access to the facility at a reasonable cost**
- Impose an additional T&C re the tenants situation and current business hire**
- Request monthly regular progress updates**

To consider any urgent items (to be decided by the Chairman)

There were none.

The meeting ended at 19:00

Minutes of the Employment Committee

Location: The Council Chamber, The Symington Building,
Adam & Eve Street, Market Harborough LE16 7AG



Date: 5th September 2024 commencing at 6.30pm

Present: Councillors Bateman, Dann, Elliott, Gair, and Johnson.

Officers: S. Hamilton – Senior Democratic Officer & Monitoring Officer

R. Jenner – Head of Human Resources

C. Mason – Director of Finance & S.151 Officer

Apologies: Councillors Bannister, Finan

1. Election of Chair 2024/25

The Senior Democratic Officer & Monitoring Officer opened the meeting and called for nominations for the position of Chair of the Employment Committee for the municipal year 2024 – 2025. Councillor Elliott was nominated by Councillor Gair. This was seconded by Councillor Johnson and there being no other nominations, Councillor Elliott was duly elected.

Councillor Elliott took the Chair.

2. Election of Vice-Chair 2024/25

Councillor Elliott called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Employment Committee for the municipal year 2024 – 2025. Councillor Gair was nominated by Councillor Johnson. This was seconded by Councillor Elliott and there being no other nominations, Councillor Gair was duly elected.

3. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bannister who was substituted by Councillor Dann and Councillor Finan who was substituted by Councillor Johnson.

4. Declarations of Members' Interests

Councillor Gair declared an interest in that he is the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee. Councillor Bateman declared an interest in that his wife

is a recipient of the Local Government Pension and is currently drawing the pension statement.

5. Draft Minutes of the Employment Committee - 13.02.23

RESOLVED that the draft minutes from the Employment Committee on 13th February 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

6. Pensions Discretions Policy Amendments

The Head of Human Resources introduced the report which invited the Employment Committee to review the proposed changes to the Council's Pensions Discretions Policy in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and recommend for adoption to Council. The Committee had the opportunity to question the officers and following the discussion it was;

RESOLVED that the Employment Committee;

- 1. Note the change in template for the Councils Pensions Discretions Policy as required by the LGPS (Appendix 3)**
- 2. Recommend to Council the adoption and implementation of a new salary sacrifice scheme for Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions for employees at no cost to the council.**
- 3. Recommend that Council adopt the revision to the discretion policy for flexible retirement for employees at no cost to the council.**
- 4. Recommend to Council that it adopts the proposed Harborough District Council Pensions Discretions Policy revisions/additions in respect of 2 and 3 above and as detailed below.**
- 5. Subject to Council approving 2, 3 and 4 above that the Head of Paid Service is given delegated authority to consider and determine any requests under the current and revised and updated Pensions Discretions Policy.**

7. Any Urgent Business

There was none.

The meeting ended at 18:50

Harborough District Council



Report to Council 7th October 2024

Title:	Recommendations from the Employment Committee, 5th September 2024
Report Title:	Pensions Discretions Policy Amendments
Recommended to Council:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That Council approve the adoption and implementation of a new salary sacrifice scheme for Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions for employees at no cost to the council.2. That Council adopt the revision to the discretion policy for flexible retirement for employees at no cost to the Council.3. That Council adopts the proposed Harborough District Council Pensions Discretions Policy revisions/additions in respect of 2 and 3 above and as detailed below.4. Subject to Council approving 1, 2 and 3 above that the Head of Paid Service is given delegated authority to consider and determine any requests under the current and revised and updated Pensions Discretions Policy.
Report Author:	Rebecca Jenner, Head of HR
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Beadle - Corporate
Appendices:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Report to Employment Committee 5th September 2024 - Pensions Discretions Policy Amendments2. Harborough District Council's Pensions Discretion Policy 20103. Harborough district Council's Pensions Discretion Policy addendum 20194. New Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Template for Leicestershire Members with Harborough District Council's pensions discretions transferred5. Minutes from the meeting of the Employment Committee 5th September 2024

Harborough District Council



Report to Employment Committee Meeting of 5th September 2024

Title:	Pensions Discretions Policy Amendments
Status:	Public
Key Decision:	N/A
Report Author:	Rebecca Jenner, Head of HR
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Beadle - Corporate
Appendices:	1) Harborough District Council's Pensions Discretion Policy 2010 2) Harborough district Council's Pensions Discretion Policy addendum 2019 3) New Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Template for Leicestershire Members with Harborough District Council's pensions discretions transferred

Summary

- i. Under the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Regulations, each scheme employer must publish and keep under review a Statement of Policy to explain how it will apply certain discretions allowed under the Pensions Regulations.
- ii. The LGPS has requested that councils update and transfer their Pensions Discretion to a new template.
- iii. Back in 2022 for the Budget Challenge 25 Programme which was to review all services using zero based budgeting principles to find savings, HR was asked to undertake a council wide review of all terms, conditions and benefits. HR was asked to undertake a review of all employee terms, conditions, benefits and allowances and present to the STAR chamber where some potential savings could be made across the council. At a BC25 Star Chamber, the panel were asked by senior officers to consider and agree to propose an amendment to the Pensions Discretions Policy to allow employees to request flexible retirement regardless of the number of hours they wish to reduce their contract by as long as there is no cost to the council. Currently the LGPS policy is a minimum reduction of 40%. CMT have subsequently agreed to the proposed revision subject to the Employment Committee recommendation for Council approval.
- iv. It is proposed to introduce a Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions scheme (SCAVCs) for all employees via salary sacrifice. The scheme will allow employees to benefit from savings in terms of National Insurance Contributions and Income tax and the council to make savings from National Insurance. The council's Pensions

Discretions Policy will need to be updated if approved. There is no cost to the council for introducing such a scheme.

Recommendations

1. Note the change in template for the Councils Pensions Discretions Policy as required by the LGPS (Appendix 3)
2. Recommend to Council the adoption and implementation of a new salary sacrifice scheme for Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions for employees at no cost to the council.
3. Recommend that Council adopt the revision to the discretion policy for flexible retirement for employees at no cost to the Council.
4. Recommend to Council that it adopts the proposed Harborough District Council Pensions Discretions Policy revisions/additions in respect of 2 and 3 above and as detailed below.
5. Subject to Council approving 2, 3 and 4 above that the Head of Paid Service is given delegated authority to consider and determine any requests under the current and revised and updated Pensions Discretions Policy.

Reasons for Recommendations

- I. In respect of recommendation 1 to note above, the Council has been advised by the Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) of a change to the Pensions Discretions template and have requested that all councils review their policies to ensure they are up to date and republished using the new template. This is an opportunity to make revisions and updates to the policy before republishing.
- II. In respect of recommendation 2 above, currently employees are able to contribute Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) to their LGPS pension. The Council now wishes to introduce a new employee benefit scheme through salary sacrifice, a Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions (SCAVCs), which will allow employees to be able to pay AVCs into their pensions schemes and make savings via National Insurance Contributions as well as Income Tax. This is a non-mandatory discretion, but employers can still have a policy on whether to adopt SCAVCs, this non mandatory amendment does not need to be published but the approval by Council needs to be documented.
- III. In respect of recommendation 3 above, currently employees who wish to apply for flexible retirement through the LGPS can only do so if they reduce their working hours by 40%, the default if individual council policies are silent. Harborough District Council wishes to update this discretion to allow greater flexibility for employees to request flexible retirement for less than 40% of their working time. All requests are subject to approval by the Head of Paid Service on a case-by-case basis.
- IV. Regarding recommendations 4 and 5, if the recommendations are adopted the Pensions Discretions Policy needs to be updated for mandatory discretions on the new LGPS template, and the Head of Paid Service given delegated authority, as they do now, for the revised mandatory discretion and non-mandatory discretion by Council, to make decisions on a case by case basis and in accordance with the Policy.

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Employment Committee is invited to review the proposed changes to the Council's Pensions Discretions Policy in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) as detailed below and recommend for adoption to Council.
- 1.2 The pension discretions outlined in this report will be added to the current agreed discretionary pension policy as previously agreed by the Council in September 2020 and as revised in June 2019. The current policy discretions are attached at Appendices 1 and 2.
- 1.3 The Leicestershire LGPS have released a new template and have requested that all Leicestershire employers who are members of the LGPS to completed for mandatory discretions and return to the LGPS. This new template will be republished.
- 1.4 The updating of the template allows an opportunity to review and amend or make additions to the council's current pensions discretion policy as recommended in Recommendations 2 and 3 above and detailed below.
- 1.5 For the Employment Committee to consider recommending to Council Recommendations 2, 3 4 and 5 for adoption.

2 Background

- 2.1 Scheme employers are required to publish and keep under review a statement of policy to explain how they will apply certain discretions that exist within the LGPS regulations. This allows employers flexibility in managing some issues relating to the LGPS benefits of their scheme members.
- 2.2 Some of the pension's discretions can assist both the Council and employees in a variety of situations in redundancy / efficiency situations or as a lead-in to retirement. In formulating its policies on pension provisions, the Council is required to determine its policy position on a number of defined pension provisions in the LGPS.
- 2.3 A number of the discretions, if adopted, could lead to significant pension capital costs being incurred by the Council (depending on the age and service of the employee). The current discretions have been proposed to minimise the possibility of the Council facing substantial pension capital costs in the future, the proposed discretions will also minimise future capital costs, and the proposed salary sacrifice scheme could result in savings for the council.
- 2.4 There is requirement for the Council to consider each request on a case-by-case basis, not just in the implementation of a blanket policy. So, whilst the Council has determined its overall policy steer, each case requires the exercise of a general discretion which will also be linked to demonstrable financial or operational benefit. This means that there will be cases where the Council grants an application under one of the policies and cases where the Council declines an application. Currently the Head of Paid Service is given delegated authority to consider and determine any requests under this current agreed policy.

- 2.5 The annual Pay Policy statement will be updated if the proposed revisions are approved by Council. The two proposed changes in discretions detailed below will apply to all employees irrespective of their seniority within the workforce.
- 2.6 The introduction of the SCAVC scheme through a third-party provider will give council employees not only access to a salary sacrifice scheme for SCAVCs and thereby save on both Income Tax and National Insurance, but the provider will also support the financial wellbeing of employees through the various tools and services including savings and investments, budgeting, debt management and retirement planning which would make this benefit an attractive offer for prospective employees.
- 2.7 This same scheme has been introduced by a number of other Local Authorities and has been welcomed by both employees and their employers.

3 Details

Introducing a Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions (SCAVCs) scheme

- 3.1 Local Government employees currently have the facility to make additional payments to their retirement over and above their standard pension deductions, called Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs). Employees can opt to have an amount deducted from their salary and achieve savings via tax relief.
- 3.2 The Council would like to propose introducing a new Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions (SCAVCs), a salary sacrifice scheme which will allow employees to have the opportunity to make further savings via National Insurance Contributions as well as Income Tax. The scheme is recognised by the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS); it is important to note that there are no additional costs to the employer which is simply facilitating the scheme and NI savings will be achieved for both employee and employer.
- 3.3 Under the new voluntary salary sacrifice SCAVCs scheme, the Council's contribution to the SCAVCs is a pensionable emolument, and pensionable pay is calculated using the pre salary sacrifice level of pay. This means member contributions; employer contributions and CARE pension build-up continue to be based on the pre salary sacrifice level of pay, as per regulation 20(1)(b) of the LGPS Regulation 2013.
- 3.4 The adoption of this scheme will result in an amendment to the council's discretions policy as a non-mandatory discretion although does not need to be added to the new template but needs to be documented. Draft amended wording is below.
- 3.5 If approved the council will procure the assistance of a third party to assist with the introduction, communication and ongoing management of this salary sacrifice arrangement.
- 3.6 At present the Council has adopted five discretions for council employees and these are set out in detail at Appendix 1 and 2. It is proposed to change the policy wording for two discretions, *Regulation 15 (3) - Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution Facility* and *Regulation 18 – Flexible Retirement* paragraph 2(1) of Schedule 2 to the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014.
- 3.7 Given the financial constraints facing local councils and the requirement to

control the impact of any capital costs moving forwards, it is proposed to not change an of the other remaining discretionary policies.

3.8 The current wording on the existing policy is:

LGPS Regulations 2013 Regulation 15 (3): Shared Cost Additional Contribution Facility

Explanation	Employer's Policy
This discretion allows the Employer to maintain and contribute to an employee's Additional Voluntary Contribution Scheme.	<p>The Council has not adopted this discretion.</p> <p>This will not have any effect on the existing AVC facility available where the employee only is able to make such contributions.</p>

3.9 It is recommended to adopt the discretion with the revised policy wording to state:

Explanation	Employer's Policy
This discretion allows the Employer to maintain and contribute to an employee's Additional Voluntary Contribution Scheme.	<p>The Council has adopted this discretion.</p> <p>Harborough District Council will pay shared cost AVCs (SCAVCs) where an employee has elected to pay AVCs by salary sacrifice. The amount of these employer shared cost AVCs will not exceed the amount of salary sacrificed by the employee. This is a discretion of Harborough District council and is subject to the employee meeting the conditions for acceptance into the salary sacrifice shared cost AVC scheme and may be withdrawn or changed at any time. This does not have any effect of the AVC facility available where the employee only is able to make such contributions.</p>

3.10 Once the procurement has been completed it is proposed to launch as soon as possible after that, the lead in time to implementation can take up to six months.

Flexible Retirement

- 3.11 Under the pension scheme rules it is possible from age 55, to retire and receive pension benefits without completely leaving employment, with the agreement of the employer to release the benefits. Flexible retirement can only be considered in situations where a pension scheme member has either reduced their working hours or reduced their grade, it is important at that stage for the employer to know the financial implications.
- 3.12 The purpose of flexible retirement is to:
- i. Help the employee ease into retirement.
 - ii. Allow the employer to retain the knowledge and skills of experienced employees.
 - iii. Assist the employer in its succession planning.
- 3.13 Employees can still build up further pension benefits in their ongoing job on either lower hours or in a less senior role.
- 3.14 The Council's policy is currently silent on the minimum % of reduction in hours that it will considered for an employee to be granted flexible retirement, therefore the discretionary power defaults to the LGPS Rules which stipulate there must be a 40% minimum reduction of hours.
- 3.15 As described in the Executive Summary above, The Budget Challenge 2025 Programme (BC25), was designed to ensure all services were reviewed using zero based budgeting principles to find savings over the MTFS period (2021/22 - 2024/25). In 2022, HR presented the proposed change to the flexible retirement pension discretion to the Star Chamber, a panel put together as a key part of the governance and challenge process who agreed in principle. In addition, a paper proposing this change to the discretions was presented to the Corporate Management Teams who also approved the change in principle pending the Employment Committee's recommendation to Council, and Council's subsequent approval. The proposed revision would state that all cases of flexible retirement seeking a reduction in hours would be considered on a case-by-case basis, see proposed wording below.
- 3.17 Current wording under Regulation 18 (current policy)

LGPS Regulations 2013 – Regulation (paragraph 2(1) of Schedule 2 to the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014 - Regulation 18 - Flexible retirement

Explanation	Council Policy
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<p>A member who is aged 55 or over and with their employers consent reduces their hours/or grade, can, but only with the agreement of the employer, make an election to the administering authority for payment of their accrued benefits without having retired from that employment.</p> <p>It is possible that where a member's pension is introduced early, those benefits will be reduced. The reduction is calculated in accordance with guidance issued by the Government Actuary. As an employer you may determine not to apply any reduction.</p>	<p>This discretionary power has been adopted but only in cases where there is no cost incurred by the council.</p>
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3.18 It is recommended to amend this discretion with the revised policy wording to state (Discretion number 11 on the new template):

Explanation	Council Policy
<p>A member who is aged 55 or over and with their employers consent reduces their hours/or grade, can, but only with the agreement of the employer, make an election to the administering authority for payment of their accrued benefits without having retired from that employment.</p> <p>It is possible that where a member's pension is introduced early, those benefits will be reduced. The reduction is calculated in accordance with guidance issued by the Government Actuary. As an employer you may determine not to apply any reduction.</p>	<p>Harborough District Council has agreed to release pension where there is no cost and not to waive any reduction. Members should reduce their hours by a minimum of 40% and/or reduce their grade, however Harborough District Council will exercise its discretionary power on a case-by-case basis for all applications for flexible retirement regardless if below the 40% minimum threshold and there is a clear financial or operational benefit to the Council. Harborough District Council may also however allow the release of pension where there is a cost or waive reduction in a potential redundancy situation, where a reduction may occur through redeployment, or in other exceptional circumstance supported by a business case.</p>

4 Implications of Decisions

4.1 Corporate Priorities

The Council is required to publish its Discretionary Pensions Policy to comply with its legal obligations. Publishing this information also helps the council to be transparent about pay with the public, communities and employees. It therefore underpins all of the Council's corporate priorities.

4.2 Financial

4.3 SCAVC scheme

- a. The scheme would result in savings to the Council's Employers' National Insurance Contributions, the level at which it would be levied would be reduced by any salary sacrifice reduction.

- b. Any Employers' NI savings made because of implementing the SCAVC scheme would be partially reduced as a % management fee based on salary sacrifice deductions made would be payable for the on-going management of the scheme to our scheme provider. The standard fee is 5%, the council will save National Insurance at 14.3% (13.8% plus 0.5% Apprentice Levy) leaving a net savings of 9.3%.
- c. The level of Employers' pension contributions payable will remain unchanged as these will still be based on the gross pay before any salary sacrifice deduction.
- d. As the level of gross pay would be reduced by any SCAVC salary sacrifice deductions for the purposes of calculating the amount payable for the Apprenticeship Levy, the levy payable would reduce accordingly.

4.4 Flexible Retirement

- 4.5 There are no financial implications for the council for adopting this pension discretion, if approved it will only be adopted if there are no costs to the Council.

5 **Legal**

- 5.1 Under Regulation 60 LGPS Regulations 2013 (as amended) each scheme employer must publish and keep under review a Statement Policy to explain how it will apply certain discretions allowed under the Pensions Regulations.
- 5.2 The proposed pensions discretions meet legislative requirements.
- 5.3 If approved for adoption, the SCAVCs scheme will be procured through a framework in accordance with procurement rules.

6 **Environmental Implications including contributions to achieving a net zero carbon Council by 2030**

- 6.1.1 None as far as this report is concerned.

7 **Risk Management**

- 7.1 None as far as this report is concerned.

8 **Equalities Impact**

- 8.1 The council has undertaken an equalities impact screening assessment and is satisfied that no adverse impacts on those with protected characteristics have been identified as a consequence of the proposed revisions to the Pensions Discretions. This policy will apply equally to all employees regardless of seniority.

9 Data Protection

- a. None as far as this report is concerned, employees sign up to the scheme voluntarily and data is stored in accordance with GDPR. There is a duty to publish the council's Pensions Discretions Policy.

10 Summary of Consultation and Outcome

- 10.1 Unison has been consulted regarding the introduction of the SCAVC scheme and the proposed changes to the flexible retirement pensions discretion and are supportive, they will be consulted again with any subsequent amendments.

11 Alternative Options Considered

- 11.1 To adopt both proposed discretionary pension policy amendments as per Recommendations 2 and 3 above at no cost to the Council and the amended Harborough District Council's Discretionary Pensions Policy.
- 11.2 To adopt the proposed discretionary pension policy amendment, the implementation of a salary sacrifice scheme, SCAVCs as per Recommendation 2 and not approve Recommendation 3 regarding flexible retirement.
- 11.3 To adopt the proposed discretionary pension policy amendment as per Recommendation 3 regarding flexible retirement and not approve the implementation of a salary sacrifice scheme, SCAVCs as per Recommendation 2.
- 11.4 Not to adopt any of the proposed recommended amendments to the pension discretions as per Recommendation 2 and 3 above.

12 Recommendation

- 12.1 For the reasons set out within this report, it is recommended that the Council consider the recommendations set out at the start of this report.

13 Background papers

- 13.1 Current Discretionary Pension Policy 2009 & Pensions Discretions Addendum June 2019.

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Regulations

Under Regulation 106 of the LGPS Regulations 1997, (as amended), each scheme employer must publish and keep under review a Statement of Policy to explain how it will apply certain discretions allowed under the Pension Regulations.

This statement is applicable to all employees of **Harborough District Council** who are eligible to be members of the LGPS.

- **Regulation 30: Early payment of retirement benefits at the member or former member's request.**

Explanation	Council Policy
<p>A scheme member or former member can request that the Council grant them early retirement between 55 and 60 years old.</p> <p>It is possible that where a member's pension is introduced early, those benefits will be reduced. The reduction is calculated in accordance with guidance issued by the Government Actuary. As an employer you may determine not to apply any reduction.</p>	<p>This discretionary power been adopted but only in cases where there is no cost incurred by the council.</p>

- **Regulation 18 - Flexible retirement**

Explanation	Council Policy
<p>A member who is aged 55 or over and with their employers consent reduces their hours/or grade, can, but only with the agreement of the employer, make an election to the administering authority for payment of their accrued benefits without having retired from that employment.</p> <p>It is possible that where a member's pension is introduced early, those benefits will be reduced. The reduction is calculated in accordance with guidance issued by the Government Actuary. As an employer you may determine not to apply any reduction.</p>	<p>This discretionary power been adopted but only in cases where there is no cost incurred by the council.</p>

Employer: Harborough District Council

LGPS Administration Regulations - Regulation 25 (3) and LGPS Benefits Regulations - Regulation 15 (3): Shared Cost Additional Contribution Facility

Explanation	Employer's Policy
This discretion allows the Employer to maintain and contribute to an employee's Additional Voluntary Contribution Scheme.	The Council has not adopted this discretion. This will not have any effect on the existing AVC facility available where the employee only is able to make such contributions.

LGPS Benefits Regulations - Regulation 12: Augmentation (increase of scheme membership)

Explanation	Employer's Policy
An employer may resolve to increase the total membership of an active member.	The Council has not adopted this discretion

LGPS Benefits Regulations - Regulation 13: Power of employer to award additional pension

Explanation	Employer's Policy
An employer may resolve to award a member additional pension of not more than £5000 a year payable from the same date as his pension payable under any other provisions of these Regulations. Additional pension may be paid in addition to any increase of total membership resolved to be made under Regulation 12.	The Council has not adopted this discretion.

Harborough District Council

The Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations 2006.

New provisions provide local government employers with powers to consider making a one off lump sum payment to an employee which must not exceed 104 weeks pay. The regulations no longer provide for the award of compensatory added years.

- **Regulation 5 - Power to increase statutory redundancy payments**

Explanation	Council Policy
The Council may decide to calculate a redundancy payment entitlement as if there had been no limit on the amount of the week's pay used in the calculation.	The Council has decided to adopt this discretion and base redundancy payment calculations on an unrestricted week's pay.

- **Regulation 6 - Discretionary Compensation**

Explanation	Council Policy
A one-off lump sum compensation payment may be awarded to an employee up to a maximum value of 104 weeks pay inclusive of any redundancy payment made. Employees who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme can be given the option of converting compensation payments (less the statutory redundancy payment) into additional pensionable service, in accordance with augmentation factors provided by the Actuary.	The council has not adopted this policy.

EMPLOYER'S CERTIFICATION

Discretionary Policies Certificate

Please sign and copy.

Keep one copy for reference and return the other to:

Leicestershire County Council

The Pensions Section

Eastern Annexe

County Hall

Glenfield

Leicester LE3 8SR

I confirm that should any of the decisions change in the future the Pensions Section will be notified immediately.

I have read the attached statements and certify that they are correct on behalf of :

Employer's Name: _____Harborough District Council

Signed: _____Signed copy held

Print Name: _____Kate Frow

Position: _____HR Manager__Date:_____21/09/2010

Discretionary Policies

Employer: **Harborough District Council**

Local Government Pension Scheme, (LGPS), Regulations Policy statement on all eligible former members effective 14th May 2018

Under the pertinent LGPS Regulations, each scheme employer must publish and keep under review a Statement of Policy to explain how it will apply certain discretions allowed under the Pensions Regulations.

This statement is applicable to all former employees of the above named employer who are eligible to be members of the LGPS and are required following the introduction of the LGPS (Amendment) Regulations 2018 in the following areas:

LGPS Benefits Regulations - Early payment of retirement benefits at a former member's request.

Election for early payment of deferred benefits at age 55 for leavers before 1 April 1998

Original Regulation 24(a) and 30(d)

Regulations amended/inserted or deleted LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014:

New reg 3(5A)(a)

Election for early payment of deferred benefits from age 55 for leavers between 1 April 1998 and 31 March 2008

Original Regulation 24(a), 30(e) and 30(f)

Regulations amended/inserted or deleted LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014:

New reg 3(5A)(b)

New para1(1)(e) of Sch 2

New para 1(1)(f) of Sch 2

Amends para 1(2) of Sch 2 and para 2(3) of Sch 2

Election for early payment of deferred benefits from age 55 for leavers between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2014

Original Regulation 24(a), 30(a), 30(c), 30(e) and 30(f)

Regulations amended/inserted or deleted LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014:

New reg 3(5A)(c)

Amends para 1(1)(a) of Sch 2

New para 1(1)(aa) of Sch 2

Amends para 1(1)(c) of Sch 2, para 1(2) of Sch 2 and para 2(3) of Sch 2

Discretionary Policies

1. Affirmation of existing policy in this area required:

Explanation	Proposed HDC Policy	Explanation of the Change
<p>Where the former member elects for voluntary early retirement before their normal pension age (NPA), the deferred benefits will be reduced for early payment.</p> <p>The scheme employer may, in respect of deferred members who can under the relevant regulations (details above) voluntarily draw their benefits on or (if regulations allow) after age 55 and prior to NPA, choose to waive on the grounds of compassion any reduction for early payment.</p> <p>The cost of which would fall upon the employer.</p> <p>n.b. "Compassionate grounds" is not defined in the regulations</p>	<p>In relation to waiving any reduction which may apply on compassionate grounds, the policy is that:</p> <p>The discretion in this area is:</p> <p>This discretion will not apply unless there are exceptional circumstances. The decision is delegated to the Joint Chief Executives as Head of Paid Service to consider any cases and decide whether the actuarial reduction should be waived.</p>	<p>To potentially provide for exceptional situations on compassionate grounds where employees are seeking to take early retirement while maximising their pension benefits</p>

Discretionary Policies

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2. Additional new decision required to cover former members who left after 1 April 1998 but before 31 March 2014 regarding Switching on 'Rule of 85'

Explanation	Employer's Policy	Explanation of the change
A former member who has not attained normal pension age (NPA) but who has attained the age of 55 or over, may elect to receive immediate payment of a retirement pension in relation to an employment if that	In relation to early retirements with employer's consent, policy on 'Switching on Rule of 85' is that: The discretion in this area	This new discretion could lead to a capital cost being payable by this Council to the pension fund.

Discretionary Policies

<p>member is not an employee in local government service in that employment, reduced by the amount shown as appropriate in actuarial guidance issued by the Secretary of State.</p> <p>In these circumstances (other than flexible retirement) the 85 year rule does not automatically apply to members who would otherwise be subject to it who choose to voluntarily draw their benefits on or after age 55 and before NPA.</p> <p>The employer has the discretion to “switch on” the 85 year rule for such a member.</p> <p>If the employer does agree to switch back on the rule of 85, the cost of any strain on the fund resulting from the payment of benefits before NPA would have to be met by the employer.</p>	<p>is:</p> <p>This discretionary power has not been adopted.</p>	
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Employer declaration sheet:

Discretionary Policies

I confirm that the above policies have been approved by the delegated person/committee.

I confirm that should any of the decisions change in the future the Pensions Section will be notified immediately.

The attached statements therefore provide a summary of the policies which have been adopted and certify that they are correct on behalf of:

Employer's Name: **Harborough District Council**

Print Name: **REBECCA JENNER**

Position: **HR Manager**

Signed:



Date: **9th August 2019**

Please sign and copy. Keep one for reference and return the other to carol.haywood@leics.gov.uk

Discretionary Policies

Local Government Pension Scheme Employer Discretions Policy

Employer name:

Harborough District Council

Membership Category	Discretion Number	Discretion	Regulation reference	Our guidance reference	Example Employer* discretions policy	Adopt example? Yes/No	Discretion if not adopting example (attach additional sheet if required)
Additional Pension							
Actives & Post 14 Leavers	1	Whether, how much, and in what circumstances to contribute to a shared cost APC scheme.	R16(2)(e) & R16(4)(d)	1.1	Harborough District Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it under exceptional circumstances, considering the business case and foreseeable costs to the employer.	Y	
Actives & Post 14 Leavers	2	Whether, at full cost to the Scheme employer, to grant extra annual pension, up to the LGPS additional pension limit (reviewed annually), to an active member or within 6 months of leaving to a member whose employment was terminated on the grounds of redundancy or business efficiency.	R31	1.2	Harborough District Council will not normally grant any additional pension to an active member or within 6 months of ceasing to be an active member by reason of redundancy or business efficiency but may consider it under exceptional circumstances, considering the business case and foreseeable costs to the employer.	Y	
Waiving of Early Retirement Reductions							
Actives & Post 14 Leavers	3	Whether to waive, in whole or in part, actuarial reduction on benefits which a member voluntarily draws before normal pension age.	R30(8)	2.1	Harborough District Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it under exceptional circumstances, considering the business case and foreseeable costs to the employer.	Y	
Actives & Post 14 Leavers	4	Whether to waive, in whole or in part, actuarial reduction on benefits paid on flexible retirement.	R30(8)	4 and/or 2.1	Harborough District Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it under exceptional circumstances, considering the business case and foreseeable costs to the employer.	Y	

Actives & Post 14 Leavers	5	Whether to waive any actuarial reduction on pre and/or post April 2014 benefits paid early on compassionate grounds.	TP3(1), TPSch 2, paras 2(1)	2.2	Harborough District Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it under exceptional circumstances, considering the business case and foreseeable costs to the employer.	Y	
Leavers between 2008 and 2014	6	Whether to waive, on compassionate grounds, the actuarial reduction applied to deferred benefits paid early.	B30(5), TPSch 2, para 2(1)	2.2	Harborough District Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it under exceptional circumstances, considering the business case and foreseeable costs to the employer.	Y	
Leavers between 1998 and 2008 plus Councillors	7	Waive, on compassionate grounds, the actuarial reduction applied to deferred benefits paid early.	31(5) & TPSch 2, para 2(1)	2.2	Harborough District Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it under exceptional circumstances, considering the business case and foreseeable costs to the employer.	Y	
Switching on the 'Rule of 85'							
Actives & Post 14 Leavers	8	Whether to "switch on" the 85 year rule for a member voluntarily drawing benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60.	TPSch 2, paras 1(2) and 2(2)	3	Harborough District Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it under exceptional circumstances, considering the business case and foreseeable costs to the employer.	Y	
Leavers between 2008 and 2014	9	Whether to "switch on" the 85 year rule for a deferred member voluntarily drawing benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60.	TPSch 2, paras 1(2) and 1(1)(c)	3	Harborough District Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it under exceptional circumstances, considering the business case and foreseeable costs to the employer.	Y	

Leavers between 1998 and 2008 plus Councillors	10	Whether to "switch on" the 85 year rule for a deferred member voluntarily drawing benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60.	TPSch 2, para 1(2) & 1(1)(f) & R60	3	Harborough District Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it under exceptional circumstances, considering the business case and foreseeable costs to the employer.	Y	
Flexible Retirement							
Actives & Post 14 Leavers	11	Whether all or some benefits can be paid if an employee over 55 reduces their hours or grade (flexible retirement).	R30(6) & TP11(2)	4	Harborough District Council has agreed to release pension where there is no cost and not to waive any reduction. Members should reduce their hours by a minimum of 40% and/or reduce their grade, however Harborough District Council will exercise its discretionary power on a case-by-case basis for all applications for flexible retirement regardless if below the 40% minimum threshold and there is a clear financial or operational benefit to the Council. . Harborough District Council may also however allow the release of pension where there is a cost or waive reduction in a potential redundancy situation, where a reduction may occur through redeployment, or in other exceptional circumstance supported by a business case.	Y	With additional discretionary powers to be exercised at no cost to the council on a case by case basis and supported by a business case
Non-Mandatory Discretions							
Active Members	12	Whether to extend the 12 month limit a member has in which to elect to transfer other pension rights into the LGPS. This must be with the agreement of the Administering Authority	R100 (6)		Harborough District Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it where extenuating circumstances apply, including where evidence exists that either an election was made within 12 months but this was not received by Leicestershire Pension Fund or evidence exists that the member was not aware of the 12 month limit due to maladministration.	Y	
Active Members	13	Whether to extend the 12 month limit a member has in which to elect not to aggregate their deferred benefits with their new LGPS employment	R22 (7) and (8)		Harborough District Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it where extenuating circumstances apply, including where evidence exists that either an election was made within 12 months but this was not received by Leicestershire Pension Fund or evidence exists that the member was not aware of the 12 month limit due to maladministration.	Y	

Active Members	14	Whether to determine which contribution band is allocated on joining the scheme and at each April. It also determines the circumstances when an employee's band may be reviewed	R9	Harborough District Council will base pay on actual pay in April plus previous year's overtime, and re-band upon a pay award and all contractual changes, but not ad-hoc hours changes.	Y
		Name: Rebecca Jenner	Signature:		
		Job title: Head of HR & OD	Date: 16th August 2024		

* Where an employer chooses to adopt the same discretion as "Example Employer", it will be deemed that any decisions will be made by the relevant decision maker(s). For example, by the employer's governing body, director(s), cabinet, committee, or appointed person(s).

Please note that where an employer does not wish to adopt "Example Employer" discretions, it is possible to have discretions to review each case on a "case-by-case basis", however please be aware of the extra work involved in reviewing each case individually and the risk of setting precedents.

Minutes of the Employment Committee

Location: The Council Chamber, The Symington Building,
Adam & Eve Street, Market Harborough LE16 7AG



Date: 5th September 2024 commencing at 6.30pm

Present: Councillors Bateman, Dann, Elliott, Gair, and Johnson.

Officers: S. Hamilton – Senior Democratic Officer & Monitoring Officer

R. Jenner – Head of Human Resources

C. Mason – Director of Finance & S.151 Officer

Apologies: Councillors Bannister, Finan

1. Election of Chair 2024/25

The Senior Democratic Officer & Monitoring Officer opened the meeting and called for nominations for the position of Chair of the Employment Committee for the municipal year 2024 – 2025. Councillor Elliott was nominated by Councillor Gair. This was seconded by Councillor Johnson and there being no other nominations, Councillor Elliott was duly elected.

Councillor Elliott took the Chair.

2. Election of Vice-Chair 2024/25

Councillor Elliott called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Employment Committee for the municipal year 2024 – 2025. Councillor Gair was nominated by Councillor Johnson. This was seconded by Councillor Elliott and there being no other nominations, Councillor Gair was duly elected.

3. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bannister who was substituted by Councillor Dann and Councillor Finan who was substituted by Councillor Johnson.

4. Declarations of Members' Interests

Councillor Gair declared an interest in that he is the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee. Councillor Bateman declared an interest in that his wife

is a recipient of the Local Government Pension and is currently drawing the pension statement.

5. Draft Minutes of the Employment Committee - 13.02.23

RESOLVED that the draft minutes from the Employment Committee on 13th February 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

6. Pensions Discretions Policy Amendments

The Head of Human Resources introduced the report which invited the Employment Committee to review the proposed changes to the Council's Pensions Discretions Policy in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and recommend for adoption to Council. The Committee had the opportunity to question the officers and following the discussion it was;

RESOLVED that the Employment Committee;

- 1. Note the change in template for the Councils Pensions Discretions Policy as required by the LGPS (Appendix 3)**
- 2. Recommend to Council the adoption and implementation of a new salary sacrifice scheme for Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions for employees at no cost to the council.**
- 3. Recommend that Council adopt the revision to the discretion policy for flexible retirement for employees at no cost to the council.**
- 4. Recommend to Council that it adopts the proposed Harborough District Council Pensions Discretions Policy revisions/additions in respect of 2 and 3 above and as detailed below.**
- 5. Subject to Council approving 2, 3 and 4 above that the Head of Paid Service is given delegated authority to consider and determine any requests under the current and revised and updated Pensions Discretions Policy.**

7. Any Urgent Business

There was none.

The meeting ended at 18:50

Council 7th October 2024

Item 12 refers

Notices of Motion

1. Motion from Cllr Bateman

Seconder Cllr Nunn

Protecting Our Most Vulnerable Pensioners from Fuel Poverty.

Labour's proposal to remove the Winter Fuel Payment (WFP) from pensioners who do not claim Pension Credit or are on other benefits is regressive and backward.

Particularly for those living in rural communities.

850,000 pensioners are eligible for the credit but don't claim it.

One in five excess winter deaths are directly attributable to cold homes, and one in ten to fuel poverty.

- (1) This Labour Government policy will mean more pensioners will die from the cold this winter. Why does this policy unfairly affect rural communities?
- (2) Rural housing is more likely to be older and less energy-efficient, with a significant proportion built before modern insulation standards were introduced.
- (3) Over 70% of rural homes in the UK were built before 1980, compared to about 50% in urban areas.
- (4) Rural houses have on average 49.6% energy efficiency compared to 65.5% in city centres.
- (5) Many rural homes are not connected to mains gas network, with households often relying on more expensive off-grid heating sources like oil, wood, or canister LPG. Around 1.5 million homes in the UK rely on oil for heating, with the majority located in rural areas.
- (6) Heating oil in January 2020 was 54p per litre, it is now 66p per litre, further straining the limited financial resources of rural pensioners. In addition, OFGEM has announced a further 10% increase in energy costs further increasing the burden.
- (7) Public Health England reports a 1.5% increase in EWDs for every degree Celsius drop below 18°C, underscoring the critical need for adequate heating. Excess winter deaths (EWDs) are a significant issue, with over 30,000 EWDs recorded in the UK each year, and a higher incidence in rural areas where healthcare access is limited.
- (8) Rural communities often face isolation due to poor transport links and limited access to services. This lack of connectivity can hinder pensioners from accessing alternative financial support, energy efficiency schemes, or healthcare services.

(9) Council resolves to:

Condemn the proposal to remove the Winter Fuel Payment from pensioners who do not claim Pension Credit or are on other benefits, recognising the disproportionate impact this will have on our most vulnerable residents, particularly those in rural communities.

Commits the Leader of this Council to write to both the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to ask for funding for a local advertising and outreach campaign to raise awareness about Pension Credit and other benefits, targeting pensioners who may be eligible but are not currently claiming.

Furthermore the Leader should commit the Council to support the 'Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners' petition being run by Age UK and write to all members offering them the opportunity to sign the petition themselves.

2. Motion from Cllr Knowles – Leader of the Council

Seconder: Cllr Bateman – Leader of the Opposition

In Harborough District we are proud of our local sports champions and in September 2021 I had the honour of seconding a motion put by the then leader of the Council to recognise the sporting achievements of our local Olympians in the 2021 Tokyo Olympics.

Now as leader of the council I have the pleasure of again proposing a motion to recognise the latest Gold medal winner from our district, Lauren Henry, who won as part of the team who competed in the Womens quadruple skulls rowing event. The team competed on 31st July in the final for this event and narrowly beat The Netherlands in a photo finish to bring home the gold medals. It is the first gold medal Team GB has ever won in the event.

Lauren, 22, who lives in Lutterworth was the youngest member of the crew. She joined Leicester Rowing Club when she was just 13 and has had a great many other wins and achievements on her journey to the Olympic gold.

To recognise this amazing success, I propose that we again ask officers to arrange for the Freedom of District to be granted to Lauren Henry in recognition of her sporting achievements and her local connection to our district ; and to arrange a special Council meeting to agree the proposal prior to the Council meeting on 9th December 2024.

The Freedom can then be bestowed on Lauren at a suitable public meeting of the Council in the coming months.

I hope that all Councillors can support this motion.

