

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL

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

Monday 20th June 2022

commencing at 6.30 p.m.

Present:

Councillor Bannister (Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs Ackerley, Bateman, Beadle, Bilbie, Dr Bremner, Burrell, Champion, Critchley, Dann, Dunton, Elliott, Frenchman, Galton, Graves, Hollick, James, Johnson, King, Knowles, Mahal, Modha, Nunn, Mrs Page, Rickman, Mrs Robinson, Sarfas, Mrs Simpson, Whelband and Mrs Wood

Officers present: D. Atkinson, L. Elliott, S. Hamilton, N. Kwasa, C. Mason and B. Morris

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Bannister announced that he had undertaken a number of civic events, particularly enjoying the Platinum Jubilee celebrations. He congratulated all the communities in the District for putting on events and by all accounts they were tremendously successful. He thanked his Vice Chairman, Cllr Mahal for her support. He also attended the Market Harborough Carnival which was a hugely popular event.

The Chairman announced a number of forthcoming Civic Events, including the Chairman's Civic Church Service on the 9th October 2022, the Chairman's Civic Carol Service on the 13th December 2022 and the Chairman's Civic Dinner on the 4th March 2023. There will be a Chairman's Quiz night and fish and chip supper on the 26th January 2023 to raise funds for the Chairman's Charity (Leicestershire and Rutland branch of MNDA).

Queens Birthday Honours - the Chairman congratulated two individuals of the Harborough District who had been given honours, Mr Tom Joule OBE and Mr Mark Selby MBE.

DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Those Councillors who are also County Councillors declared an interest in Item 6: Question 4 from Members, in particular Councillor Bannister declared that he sits on the County Council Planning Committee.

MINUTES

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

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on the 13th December 2021, and adjourned to the 21st February be received and adopted.

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

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on the 21st February 2022, and adjourned to the 24th February be received and adopted.

REPORT OF THE LEADER

The Leader preceded his report by congratulating Councillor Whelband on becoming the Vice-Chair of the Leicester and Leicestershire Police and Crime Commission. The Leader also congratulated Mr Tom Joule OBE and Mr Mark Selby MBE, who were given Queens Birthday Honours.

COVID19

There are of course many unsung heroes of the pandemic, too many to highlight here, but I extend my warmest thanks to them all, and also to those workers who didn't stop and carried on in their jobs, to work in food shops, warehouses and drive lorries so we could continue to be fed, watered and vaccinated.

Back at our meeting in February, we were expecting at long last for the COVID19 restrictions on our lives to be removed by the Government so we could get on living again.

I'm glad that the restrictions have all ended, but it's also right that the considerable impacts on our health and wellbeing, education, and economic outlook are now properly understood and dealt with, so that we can avoid such draconian measures being taken ever again.

So it has been truly fantastic to welcome back all manner of public events across the Harborough district.

A couple that stand out for me, so far, are the Market Harborough Carnival, on June 11, which, along with the 10K race in the morning, attracted many of thousands of people into the town centre for the pageant convoy and the subsequent events and stalls down at the Council's Symington Recreation Ground, off St Mary's Road.. I was delighted to be asked to present, along with Chairman Cllr Bannister, the trophies for the top three groups from the pageant. The work of the volunteers was Herculean and I congratulate them all on making this year's comeback show such a success.

Next was the Fernie Country Show, held at Great Bowden on 12 June. Whilst much smaller, it is no less important, in that it's an opportunity for residents to find out more about many country crafts and pursuits, which are still vital parts of our rural economy and way of life.

The Queen's Jubilee

When, earlier this year, I announced our small grant support scheme for communities in the Harborough district to help celebrate and commemorate the unique and historic Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen, little did I expect at what a glorious response there would be. Local communities demonstrated their loyalty and respect for Her Majesty across the district with innumerable community events, local street parties, trees planted, flags raised and waved, artwork produced and exhibited, as well as beacon lighting, and picnics in the parks. What a memory to treasure for us all.

One of the many things that is often cited in surveys is that citizens respect Her Majesty for her dedication and devotion to her duty, to her life-long commitment to us, the people of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth.

Community Service

It's that dedication of public service to help others that has been recognised by the publication last week of the list of 70 schools, businesses, voluntary and community groups across Leicester and Leicestershire which have been awarded a Queen's Platinum Jubilee award for their outstanding efforts to improve their local communities.

The winners – each representing a year of Her Majesty The Queen's reign – were announced by Mike Kapur, the Lord-Lieutenant of Leicestershire. These included the following recipients in the Harborough District:

- 1st Kibworth Scouts
- HAB Anti-Bullying
- Mental Health Market Harborough,

- HFM
- Lutterworth Volunteer Centre
- Market Harborough Drama Society
- South Leicestershire Litter Wombles
- Scraftoft Joggers

My warmest congratulations to them all for the enrichment that they provide to our communities. Awards will be presented later in the year, when I hope that here at HDC we will be able to announce more about how we intend to recognise our community champions. This would include current awards, such as the Citizen's Cup, plus the creation of new ways to recognise contributions to the community that are focussed district wide, (as the Citizen's Cup is limited to Market Harborough only).

[Sensational 70 make up glittering awards list | Leicestershire County Council](#)

Armed Forces Day

Earlier today, I, along with the Chairman Cllr Neil Bannister, Deputy Lieutenant Richard Everard, Vice Chairman and Armed Forces Champion Cllr Rani Mahal, and the new Mayor of Lutterworth Cllr Bill Zilberts, participated in the ceremony on Church Square opposite The Symington Building to hoist the flag for the commencement of Armed Forces Week.

Prayers were read by the Rev Andy Giles and there were a small number of veterans, representatives from the Armed Forces and Royal British Legion, and other community groups in attendance.

Afterwards, when speaking to the veterans, I'm always struck by their positive attitudes and approach to life, despite having made sacrifices that I can't imagine, having lost family, friends and their comrades at arms, in the most horrendous of circumstances, in order to protect us, in order to ensure that we can remain free, and able to speak our minds without fear nor favour.

This week of activity cumulates, on Saturday 25 June, with Armed Forces Day and a parade through Leicester City Centre.

Ukrainian refugees

The response by our residents in the Harborough district to the unwarranted invasion of Ukraine, by Mr Putin's forces, has been fantastic. From the initial support sent to refugees in neighbouring countries to now the sponsoring of refugees through the Homes for Ukraine scheme, the support offered has been outstanding.

As the response to the question from Cllr Nunn outlines, there are presently over 100 Ukrainian citizens residing across the Harborough District, with potentially several hundred more set to arrive.

Again, the sense of service and duty that our residents have to support their fellow citizens is phenomenal. My sincerest and warmest thanks to all those who are involved in supporting them. This Council is working closely with community groups across the district as well as the County Council to deal with the innumerable issues that have cropped up.

Our webpage is updated whenever there is new information to publicise.

[Support Ukraine | Harborough District Council](#)

Greener and Cleaner

As part of my regular feature about how we are working to make Harborough a cleaner and greener place:

EV Charging Points

As mentioned back in February, ten more electric vehicle charging points, with associated bays, are now ready to use, in Doddridge Road, St Mary's West, and Angel Street car parks in Market Harborough

– all chosen as they are a short distance from homes without off-street parking. Overnight parking is free at Council-owned car parks from 6pm to 7am.

The charge points have been installed, in partnership with EB Charging, after Harborough District Council was successful in securing Government funding to assist residents without off-street parking.

75 per cent of the funding for the £73,000 project is from Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV), with the rest coming from the Council and partners, including nearly £12,000 from EB Charging.

In 2018/19, there were 181 charges from existing charge points in the district, that increased by approximately five times for the following two years, and in 2021/22 there were 3,090 charges – over three times higher than the previous year.

Find out more about local electric charge-up points at www.harborough.gov.uk/evehicles

Solar Together

This campaign has just ended across the Harborough district, Leicestershire and Leicester. A more substantial response, than would normally have been expected, has been achieved. Out of the 8,153 registrations, 18.6% (1518) were in the Harborough district. Further information will be issued to registered residents once the auction has concluded.

Levelling Up, devolution and devo deals

Since we last met in February, the Government has published the legislative bill, as part of its Queens Speech, and that is presently on its second reading in the House of Commons.

There is much in this that I welcome, especially the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to districts - in Harborough's case this means over the next three years we expect to receive approx £2.1m, but before we do, we have to submit a very high level investment plan that accords with the relevant government guidance by the 1 August. Officers are working on this and there will be a presentation to all members during July. A meeting with partners, as stipulated in the guidance, is in the process of being convened, prior to the submission date.

As an active member of the District Councils Network we are working with other members to lobby Parliament to amend the legislation so that districts can have a role in the future governance model of a devo deal, depending on what level of devo is being sought; this is currently not permitted by the draft legislation.

Last week, you may also have seen the news that Derby and Notts are moving ahead with discussions with Government about a Combined Authority (D2N2) for the East Midlands, but that excludes us here in Leics.

Whilst we are all aware that Leicestershire County Council was listed as one of the 9 pathfinder authorities for a devo deal; we now know that the original proposal was for what would have been a Level 3 deal, but this did not have the required support across the 'functional economic area' which is Leics, Leicester and Rutland, due to objections by the City Mayor.

The City Mayor thinks it's a 'daft' idea and the CA for the East Midlands.

The City Mayor, is now THE roadblock to the combined LLR benefitting from a long-term investment solution to our areas' and communities of (based on the averages of other deals) approx £1BILLION over 30 years, as well as the decentralised powers that were on offer, potentially. That in my book is a VERY daft idea and I will be continuing to advocate that he changes his mind, or the Government, legislates so that a Unitary authority cannot be a roadblock like this.

Finally, I'd like to extend my sincere congratulations to the Leicester Tigers for their superb win on Saturday to lift the Gallagher Rugby Premiership title again. Hearty thanks to all the players, coaches and officials for making this such a superb advert for the game of rugby.

Comments on the Leader's report

Councillor Knowles asked a number of questions as follows :-

1. In relation to Covid 19 and Community Service, are we looking for alternatives to the Citizen's Cup?
2. How many more refugees are we anticipating in the District ?
3. Greener and Cleaner – can assurance be given that the work of the Green Working Group will be included in the Council's on-going reporting mechanisms.
4. Levelling Up and Devo Deal – what are the guarantees that the District will receive £2.1 million.
5. Birthday Honours – offered his congratulations to those people in the District awarded The Queen's Birthday Honours.

Councillor James commented that he has met a number of Ukraine refugees at coffee mornings and also one child is at school in Little Bowden. He also commented that it was very regrettable for the government to stop grants for electric cars and for charging points.

Leader's response

The Leader responded that more information would be available in the Autumn regarding the Community Awards.

In relation to the situation in Ukraine, the District is looking to host more than 300 refugees.

With regards to the Green Agenda, the 'green' KPI's are being embedded into the Corporate Plan.

He advised that in relation to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to districts, the £2.1million would be received over three years.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE PUBLIC

There were none.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS

- i. The following question was submitted by Councillor Nunn to the Portfolio Holder For Housing And Wellbeing :

Can you provide me with an update on the situation within the Harborough District regarding sponsorship and ongoing support for Ukrainian people? Specifically, I would like to know the following information:

1. Numbers of those who have registered an interest to sponsor.
2. Numbers of those who have applied for visas.
3. Numbers of those who have already welcomed families/people into their homes.
4. How well we are meeting targets to complete home checks?
5. Have there been any homes who have not passed, if so, what were the reasons why and how are we supporting them to achieve the required standards?
6. What support are we offering to both sponsors and families/people going forward?
7. How many hours have been spent by officers completing home checks and supporting families?
8. Has funding been received from Leicestershire County Council? If not;
 - (i) When is it due?
 - (ii) How much are we expecting to date?

Councillor Whelband, as the Portfolio holder responded as follows :-

1. 456 people have registered on the government website to sponsor a Ukrainian/ family in Harborough District. (this number includes the families who have now matched with a family which is 103).
2. 111 sponsors have matched with a family/individual and have applied for Visas to support Ukrainian families travelling to Harborough district, Which will equate to 307 Ukraine guests. 122 guests will be under the age of 18 years.
3. 48 sponsors have guests arrived here in Harborough District as of the 06/06/2022 – that equates to 109 Ukrainian guests.
4. As of the 06/06/2022 - 92 property inspections have been completed - we have another 11 to do that came in today and just before the bank holiday. which will be completed over the coming week.
5. Only one property inspection was failed - but this was not due to the conditions of the property. More a communication error between the son and mother where he had suggested someone could live.
6.
 - Administrating the property inspection part of the process.
 - We have a SPOC - for all contact and liaison with sponsors -
 - We are supporting the families that have guests with information, offers of help/support
 - Supporting two families more intensively with possible rehosting arrangements.
 - Customer services have had 4 requests for food parcels -
 - Economic development - have run a job club in Harborough & support the Lutterworth job club that is monthly.
 - We are looking at hosting a sponsors and guest event in July to help with next steps such as housing.
 - We have been linking people to support groups, and officers have attended these groups.
 - Free membership to the Gyms
 - We are looking at what summer holiday support there is for children, to prepare them for the start of school in September. Could be open, to all children where English is there second language.
 - Have dedicated web pages for support on HDC website
 - Posters at local stations.
7.
 - The scheme started on the 06.04.2022 and this was when we received our first list for inspections. -
 - So far 78 hours has been given to just completing property inspections.
 - We have a dedicated SPOC as stated above, who on average is dedicating around 2 days a week. However, this is expected to increase as potential relationship breakdowns may occur and preventative services are aligned to reduce this.
 - We also have other officers who are contributing towards the Harborough District Council offer for the guests and sponsors and this is from a range of officers, Economic Development, Equality and Diversity Officer, Regulatory Service, Communications and Housing.
8. There are on-going discussions between the County and all of the districts on the spilt of the funding to ensure that all councils are re-imbursed for their work to date.
 - No funding has been received from DLUHC at present.
 - This is likely to be based on fixed costs and on the number of Ukraine guests each district has received.

Councillor Nunn asked a supplementary question as to what the Council will do to rehouse refugees in the District who wish to stay longer than twelve months.

The Portfolio holder responded that the Council has a duty to re-house, however will continue to speak to government and the Council will do all it can to help.

ii. The following question was submitted by Councillor Knowles to the Leader:

On Wednesday March 2nd 2022 Members of this Authority who were attending the Audit and Standards and who were seated in the gallery in order to listen to the debate on Report 6 were ordered from the Chamber.

This when a Recommendation for Exclusion of All Members other than Members of the Audit and Standards Committee was carried by a majority not unanimous vote. I believe that exclusion of members in this way may be unprecedented or at the very least very exceptional.

Could the Leader tell me please, on how many occasions, since the formation of HDC, have members who are attending to hear a debate been excluded from the chamber in this way ?

The Leader responded as follows:

Specific records are not kept relating as to when and if this has occurred in the past. It can however be confirmed on this occasion legal advice was sought and due process was followed in accordance with the Council's Constitution prior to making the decision to exclude.

Councillor Knowles asked a supplementary question: 'Does the Leader agree with the expulsion of Members from meetings ?

The Leader responded by reconfirming that a Recommendation for Exclusion of All Members other than Members of the Audit and Standards Committee was carried by a majority not unanimous vote.

iii. The following question was submitted by Councillor Graves to the Leader:

A Settlement Agreement, also known as a Compromise Agreement, is defined by the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) as:

Settlement agreements (previously known as compromise agreements) are legally binding contracts used to end employment on agreed terms that include the employee making binding promises not to sue the employer, in return for a payment.

The rules governing settlement agreements are contained in the Employment Rights Act 1996, especially section 203.

Employers and employees can try to reach a settlement (either before or after a tribunal claim has started) by:

- *negotiating directly and entering into the agreement, although the employee will need legal advice to make that agreement legally binding.*
- *agreeing to an Acas conciliated settlement.*
- *using a private mediator.*
- *using judicial mediation by an employment judge where tribunal proceedings have been issued.*

In the last 4 years from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2022 Harborough District Council have entered into eleven separate Settlement Agreements as follows: (Information obtained under Freedom of Information)

Four settlements were under £10,000; Two settlements were between £10,000 and £20,000; Three settlements were between £20,000 and £30,000; Two settlements were above £30,000. A prudent estimate for the total amount of money involved would be somewhere above £200,000 over the four-year period.

The average number of Settlement Agreements for all other Districts in Leicestershire – also including Rutland CC – during the same four year period is only four each. For a small District Council, the number of Settlement Agreements appears to be around three times the average for the rest of Leicestershire. What does the Council Leader think about this surprising and worrying information?

The Leader responded as follows:

Firstly, it is disappointing that to obtain publicly available information, a fellow Councillor thinks it is necessary to make a Freedom of Information request to the Council where they are a member.

Secondly, Cllr Graves states that the Council has issued 11 Settlement Agreements at an estimated cost of £200,000; compared to an average of 4 at other Leicestershire local authorities – I wonder what their total cost was? An average of £18,000 per settlement to maintain good employee and employer relations feels fair and proportionate whilst the Council follows a progressive transformation programme.

However, as we all know settlement agreements are legal documents entered into by an employee and an employer respectively in order to end employment when both parties have agreed that a term of employment must to come to an end. There are a multitude of reasons why it is appropriate to enter into a settlement agreement including for example when an employee leaves their employment due to either compulsory or voluntary redundancy or when the mutual trust and confidence in the relationship has broken down or even on compassionate grounds. However, no matter what the reason is, the use of settlement agreements are both appropriate and proportionate and used by all organisations. Such agreements are always subject to both parties having taken appropriate legal advice and the Council does reimburse the employee for the cost of their independent legal advice.. The reasons and terms of settlement agreements are confidential and cannot be disclosed.

All councillors need to remember that over the past 24 months the Council has undertaken a significant budget review, and this has resulted in some employees leaving the authority due to a number of reasons including redundancy. You are well aware that the Council is facing unrelenting pressure from increasing demand and inflationary cost increases that are impacting across all services and potential capital investments. To combat this, the Council continues its transformation programme that will introduce new and a more efficient technology infrastructure and will continue to review how its delivers both its day-to-day, corporate and strategic services – as members will have seen elsewhere on the agenda. What this may mean is that as the Council continues to review its delivery model, settlement agreements will remain an option to be used as necessary to ensure that we have the workforce that we need to deliver essential services.

Councillor Graves asked a supplementary question: why does the Leader feel that the £18k per settlement to maintain good employee relations feels fair and proportionate ?

The Leader responded by stated that he had nothing further to add.

iv. The following question was submitted by Councillor Sarfas to the Leader:

The negative traffic impact on surrounding homes and residents from the potential of the huge quarry development at Misterton is raising major concerns in the wider community.

Does the Leader agree that this quarry with its huge negatives on the daily lives of the community should be vigorously opposed ?

The Leader responded as follows:

Harborough District Council have recently been made aware of this potential proposal. It is our understanding that this is not yet a formal proposal but more in the form of an informal pre-application approach from the promoters to the Waste and Minerals authority, Leicestershire County Council. It would be the County Council that would determine any planning application relating to this matter in their role as the Waste and Minerals Planning authority.

Harborough District Council would be consulted on any planning application submitted to the County Council for consideration and HDC would have the opportunity to submit comments on any proposal, should it get as far as being a planning application.

Councillor Sarfas asked a supplementary question: which side is the Leader on – the side of the quarry or the side of the residents ?

The Leader responded by stating that the Council is not the decision making body for this potential planning application. A formal proposal has not yet been submitted to the Planning Authority, which in the particular case is Leicestershire County Council.

v. The following question was submitted by Councillor Dr Bremner to the Leader:

Can you confirm that Councillors who have moved from their original ward address when first elected, but remain living and/or working in the Harborough District are still able to claim allowances, including travel to/from official meetings; and would this also be the same for any member that for example was no longer living or working in Harborough District - would they still be able to claim travel costs from, for example: Surrey, a round trip of 200 miles ?

The Leader responded as follows:

Councillors who have moved from their original ward address when first elected, but remain living and/or working in the Harborough District are still able to claim allowances, including travel to/from official meetings.

As the Council's current Members Allowance Scheme does not currently cover circumstances where a Member is no longer living or working in Harborough District, a reasonable and prudent approach would be for that Member to claim a travel allowance calculated via their route from the border of the Harborough District to the location of the official meeting.

Preparation for a review of the Members Allowance Scheme is being undertaken in the next few months, which will be brought to Members post-2023 local elections.

Councillor Dr Bremner asked a supplementary question: Could the Leader confirm that the minimum number of attendances of the meetings of Council is two over a year ?

The Leader responded that he felt it was not satisfactory for a Member to only attend two meetings a year, unless the Member was unable to attend due to illness.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET

1. The Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Councillor Bateman introduced the recommendations of the Cabinet from its meeting on the 7th March 2022.

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

RESOLVED that:

- (i) **the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) be adopted and that it should be implemented as soon as possible,**
- (ii) **the Monitoring Fee Background Evidence Paper and Schedule of Charges 2021/22 be published on the Council's website, implemented, and reviewed as appropriate,**
- (iii) **authority be delegated to the Director of Planning and Regeneration to correct any minor or typographical errors,**
- (iv) **authority be delegated to the Director of Planning and Regeneration to comply with the requirements for adopting the SPD (including publishing the consultation statement, preparing any supporting documentation and communications etc.).**

2. Market Harborough Town Centre Masterplan

Councillor King introduced the recommendation of the Cabinet from its meeting on the 7th June 2022.

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

RESOLVED that the Market Harborough Town Centre Masterplan be adopted as Council policy.

3. Senior Officer Structure Options

Councillor Dann introduced the recommendations of the Cabinet from its meeting on the 7th June 2022.

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

RESOLVED that:

- (i) **the current interim Chief Executive, Elizabeth Elliott, be extended in the role until 31 December 2022 or until a new permanent appointment is in post if earlier, to cover the period of the recruitment and that Clive Mason act as their deputy.**
- (ii) **the preferred option in respect of the permanent recruitment to the vacant Chief Executive post be the pursual of a shared Chief Executive as outlined in (iii) below;**
- (iii) **the selection of a strategic partner, based on the criteria set out in the report and Appendix 1, be delegated to the Leader and interim Chief Executive, and negotiations be progressed with that partner and reported back to Council on the suggested way forwards at a later date.**
- (iv) **a new interim Monitoring Officer, Clare Pattinson, confirmed following a selection process, is appointed with effect from 2nd July 2022 whilst a longer-term recruitment to the post is undertaken.**

- (v) **the current Interim Director of Communities contract is extended until the 31st March 2023 to allow time for any further changes to be considered and implemented.**

REPORT FROM THE CABINET

Councillor King introduced the report from the Cabinet, detailing the Decisions taken by the Cabinet from the meetings of the 7th March, 4th April 2022 and 7th June was NOTED.

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE LICENSING COMMITTEE MEETING OF 9TH FEBRUARY 2022

1. Gambling Act 2005 – Revised Statement of Principles

Councillor Dann introduced the recommendation of the Licensing Committee from its meeting on the 9th February 2022.

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

RESOLVED that the revised Statement of Principles attached as Annex A to the report be adopted.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING OF 9TH MARCH 2022

1. Proposed Amendments to the Constitution – Review of Keeping Ward Members Informed

Councillor King introduced the recommendations of the Constitutional Review Committee from its meeting on the 9th March 2022.

It was moved by Councillor King, seconded by Councillor Mrs Page and

RESOLVED that:

- (i) **the amendment to the Constitution set out in the report, in relation to Part 5, Section 3: Section 10 of the Protocol on Member and Officer Relations, be approved, and all references to the “Sensitive Issues Procedure” in the Constitution are deleted;**

10. Involvement of Ward Councillors.

10.1 It is essential that in order for Members to carry out their duties they need to be kept fully informed about matters on which they may be required to make decisions or which affect their Wards.

10.2 It is vital all relevant staff are aware of the requirement to keep Members informed and that the timing of such information allows Members to contribute to those decisions. Local Ward Members shall also be kept informed about significant matters affecting their Ward.

10.3 Whenever a public meeting is organised by the Council to consider a local issue, all the Members representing the Ward(s) affected should as a matter of course be invited to attend the meeting.

10.4 Similarly, whenever the Council undertakes any form of consultative exercise, the Local Ward Member(s) should be notified immediately prior to the outset of the exercise.

2. Proposed Amendments to the Constitution – Revision to Contract Procedure Rule 4

Councillor King introduced the recommendation of the Constitutional Review Committee from its meeting on the 9th March 2022.

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

RESOLVED that the amendments to the Constitution set out in Appendix B to the report are adopted.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING OF 8TH JUNE 2022

1. Proposed Amendments to the Constitution – Financial Procedure Rules and Sealing of Documents

Councillor King introduced the recommendations of the Constitutional Review Committee from its meeting on the 8th June 2022.

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

RESOLVED that the amendments to the Constitution set out in Appendices A and B to the report are adopted.

2. Proposed Amendments to the Constitution – Review of Arrangements for dealing with complaints under the Member’s Code of Conduct – Part 5 of the Constitution

Councillor King introduced the recommendations of the Constitutional Review Committee from its meeting on the 8th June 2022.

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

RESOLVED that the arrangements for Dealing with Complaints under the Members’ Code of Conduct be amended in accordance with Appendix 1 to the report.

3. Update to Part 3: Responsibility for Functions

Councillor King introduced the recommendations of the Constitutional Review Committee from its meeting on the 8th June 2022.

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

RESOLVED that the delegations be updated in section B.2.4, Part 3 of the Council’s Constitution as noted in Appendix A to the report.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Councillor Mrs Page, as Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission presented the Annual report and thanked Members and Officers for all of their hard work in undertaking the Scrutiny function.

REPORT ON THE SUPPORT FOR THE MARKET HARBOROUGH TOWN FAIRTRADE RENEWAL

The Council considered the report seeking member support for the application by Market Harborough Fairtrade Town Group in their application for the renewal of Fairtrade town status.

Market Harborough became a Fairtrade town in 2006; the first town to do so in Leicestershire. This status is renewed periodically, and the last renewal was in 2018. The Market Harborough Fairtrade Town Group will be applying for renewal in the summer of 2022.

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

RESOLVED that support be endorsed for the renewal application for Market Harborough to retain status as a Fairtrade town.

NOTICE OF MOTION (1) SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE 12.1 OF PART 4(1) OF THE COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

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

" In principle it is accepted that Councillors in general have the right to access any information held by the Council of which they are a member and whilst this right of access may not extend to the publication or otherwise making public, Councillors may be asked to sign up to a confidentiality undertaking before being provided with certain information.

The integrity of Councillors is beyond question, if Councillors are asked to protect confidentiality then I believe without question that members will do so.

The Audit and Standards of Wednesday March 2nd 2022 included a report under Report 6, termed as Assets Review which the Council publicly acknowledged, included the long awaited Report on Naseby Development in Harborough.

Four members of this authority were given sight of the complete report, only after this was the matter taken for QC's advice as to who else could, would be given sight of the report. Following on from this advice the report was shared with members of the Audit and Standards Committee only.

Members of the public were excluded from the meeting and then in line with the officer recommendation and by a majority vote, not unanimous vote, members of this authority (Councillors) who were seated in the gallery were excluded from the council chamber and not allowed to even hear the debate.

Members are to be asked to accept the recommendations from the Audit and Standards without having seen the original report, listened to the debate or understanding the basis for those recommendations. Surely if Councillors are asked put their names to Council policies and decisions they must be in possession of the full facts. After all, it is the Councillors names on the ballot papers at election time, they are accountable to the electorate for the decisions and policies of the authority and the Councillors own stance on those decisions and policies.

I am unable to expand in any detail of the report, the discussions or the decisions taken. Not even to my own Group or to independent Legal Advisors. I am unable to comment on the roots of the decisions and recommendations but I continue to believe that members must have the option to access to the reports etc.

It is therefore moved....

1. That Council instructs officers to make a copy of the full report to Audit and Standards of March 2022 immediately to all members who express a wish, in writing, to see the documents.
2. That these copies be made available on a confidential basis to members so that when commenting, accepting or amending any recommendations from Audit and Standards they do so having access to all of the information.
3. Where and as necessary the Council Officers be asked to address any delegation issues that might restrict or impact on the delivery covered in points One and Two.

Councillor Knowles requested a recorded vote which was supported by more than four other Members.

On being put to the vote the Motion was lost.

Recorded vote

For: Cllrs Beadle, Burrell, Dunton, Elliott, Galton, Graves, James, Johnson, Knowles, Sarfas and Mrs Simpson (11)

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

Abstention: Cllrs Bannister and Frenchman (2)

The Interim Chief Executive, Liz Elliott advised that Officers were of the belief that the Constitution was followed correctly, however in the interest of fairness she will undertake for this to be reviewed and will report back on her findings.

URGENT ITEMS

There were none.

The Meeting closed at 9.21pm