

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING

held in the Council Chamber, The Symington Building, Adam and Eve Street,  
Market Harborough

held on 6 November 2017

commencing at 6.00 p.m.

Present:

Councillor Bannister (Chair),

Councillors: Mrs Ackerley, Bateman, Hadkiss, Hall, King and Rickman

Officers: D. Atkinson, S. Hamilton, B. Jolly, N. Proudfoot, S. Riley and V. Wenham

PORTFOLIO HOLDER ACTIVITY REPORTS

Corporate Governance

Councillor Hadkiss reported that he had received an initial briefing from Officers regarding his Portfolio.

Community Safety and Licensing

Councillor Rickman reported that he had attended a recent Hope and Remembrance Service at Leicester Cathedral for victims of hate crime, as part of National Hate Crime Awareness Week.

Finance and Assets

Councillor Hallam reported that he had received a briefing from Officers regarding his Portfolio.

Wellbeing and Localities

Councillor Ackerley reported that she had held a meeting with organisations in Leicestershire dealing with health. She had also visited Market Harborough and Lutterworth Leisure Centres. In addition she had attended a very successful Annual Parish Liaison Meeting and had received very positive feedback on the event. She and the Leader asked for thanks to be recorded to all Officers involved.

Environment and Regulatory Services

Councillor Bateman reported that he had received a briefing from Officers regarding his Portfolio.

Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Regeneration

Councillor King reported that a decision had been taken to extend the consultation period for the Local Plan, and he had attended the Leicestershire Members Advisory Group meeting.

## MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2017 be approved as a correct record.

## DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor King declared a personal interest in the item on the Kibworths' Neighbourhood Plan. The nature of the interest was that Councillor King is a resident in Kibworth.

## SECOND ANNUAL REPORT ON THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE CLIMATE LOCAL ACTION PLAN

The Executive considered the second Annual report of progress against the Climate Local Action Plan adopted by Council in 2015.

The Council agreed to become a signatory of the Local Government Association initiative for addressing climate change, known as Climate Local in April 2013. Climate Local requires all signatories to produce an action plan detailing their planned activity to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Councils are also asked to report annually on progress against the action plan.

The carbon emissions from corporate assets are monitored and is showing a downward trend from the 2008 base year data. Direct emissions (heating and travel) from Council services have reduced by 4% from the base year data and indirect (electricity usage) has reduced by 22%. The installation of solar photovoltaic panels and LED lighting in the Market Hall has made an impact. However it should be noted that there have been significant changes to the way both the Market Hall and The Symington Building are used since the based line data was collated so a direct comparison can be difficult.

Across the district the carbon emission have dropped but are still above the Leicestershire and national average. This is partly due to the number of older properties without direct access to gas central heating and the rural nature of the district means there is more reliance on car use rather than public transport.

During the year the Council has been working with Flourish Partnership to signpost residents to appropriate funding for energy efficiency improvements. In 2106 170 homes have received additional energy efficiency improvements which could equate to a reduction of over 6600 tonnes of carbon over a 20 year lifetime.

RESOLVED that the content of the second Annual Report on Climate Local, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be noted.

## Summary of Reasons

For the Executive to be informed about the completion and content of the Second Annual Report on Climate Local.

## KIBWORTHS' NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Executive considered the recommendations of the Examiner on the Kibworths' Neighbourhood Plan (the 'Plan'). The Plan has been produced by the Kibworth Neighbourhood Plan Group, led by the Parish Council as the Qualifying Body, in conjunction with the local community.

The Plan does not seek to allocate sites for housing, but relies on windfall housing to provide for Kibworths' future housing need.

The final Examiner's Report into the Plan was received by the Council on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2017 and was made available to the public on the Council's website shortly after. The report recommended to the Council that subject to the modifications proposed, the Plan should proceed to a Referendum.

The Examiner recommended some policy deletions from the submitted version of the Neighbourhood Plan due to policies either being repeated, conflicting with National Policy or not being land based policies.

Kibworth Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan Group have given the Report due consideration and resolved via email that it is in agreement with the recommended modifications of the Examiner to the Neighbourhood Plan. Officers are also in agreement with the recommendations of the Examiner.

The date for the referendum is provisionally set for the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and this will follow a similar format to an election. All those registered to vote within the Neighbourhood Area will be given the opportunity to be involved in the Referendum. Local residents will receive a ballot paper with the question; "Do you want Harborough District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for the Kibworths' to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"

Residents will be given the opportunity to vote 'yes' or 'no'. If more than 50% of those voting in the referendum vote 'yes' then the Local Planning Authority is required to 'make' the plan (adopt the Plan, with the Plan becoming the Development Plan for the Kibworths' alongside the Core Strategy). Under the approved Neighbourhood Planning Scheme of Delegation 'making' the Plan will be done by Officers of Harborough District Council as soon as possible after a favourable Referendum result. If the result of the Referendum is "no", then nothing further happens. The Parish Council will then have to decide how it wishes to proceed.

RESOLVED that:

- i) the Independent Examiner's recommended changes to the Kibworths' Neighbourhood Plan are accepted in full as set out in the schedule at Appendix A to the report, and the recommendation that the amended Kibworths' Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a referendum of voters within the Parish of Kibworth (Harcourt and Beauchamp) to establish whether the Plan should form part of the Development Plan for the Harborough District be noted.
- ii) the holding of a referendum relating to the Kibworths' Neighbourhood Plan on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018 that will include all of the registered electors in the Kibworth Parish be approved.

## Summary of Reasons

The final Examiner's report into the Kibworths' Neighbourhood Plan was received on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2017. The Examiner considered the Plan along with the representations received when the Plan was published by the Council. The report recommends to the Council that, subject to the modifications proposed (as set out in Appendix A to the report), the Plan should proceed to a referendum.

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, (Regulation 18) sets out the matters that the District Council should consider at this stage in the Neighbourhood Plan making process. The District Council must consider each of the recommendations made by the Examiner in their report, including the reasons for them, and decide what action to take in response to each recommendation (as set out in Appendix A to the report).

It is considered that the recommended modifications should be incorporated into the plan and noted by the Executive in order to ensure that the plan is robust, sound, meets the Basic Conditions and comprises a user-friendly and efficient document. Liaison with Kibworth Parish Council confirms that they are happy to accept these recommendations. On this basis, the Plan should then proceed to a referendum in Kibworth Parish to determine if local people support it.

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Kibworth Neighbourhood Plan Group and Kibworth Parish Council.

The evidence provided to the Examiner within the Consultation Statement gave assurance to her that the consultation process was robust. The Examiner was therefore satisfied that the Plan met the Basic Conditions with regard to consultation.

In proceeding to a referendum with a plan that meets the prescribed Basic Conditions, it was confirmed that the whole community, both Kibworth Beachamp and Kibworth Harcourt will be afforded the opportunity to vote on the future development of the villages and wider parishes of Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt.

## BUSINESS RATES – DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF SCHEMES

The Executive considered the proposed scheme for Discretionary Rate Relief arising from the Government's Spring Budgets as well as the details of two other schemes introduced in the Spring budget offering support to small businesses.

The Government periodically through the Valuation Office Agency resets the rateable values of all non domestic properties. The last revaluation came into force on the 1st April 2017. As a result, many businesses saw significant variances in what they have to pay.

When a revaluation takes place the government implements a national transitional relief scheme to mitigate against large increases and decreases in rateable values over several years. In addition, the Government introduced a series of specific relief schemes to support certain businesses as part of the 2017 revaluation. The reliefs are:

- Discretionary Revaluation Rate Relief – The Government announced a £300 million pot to be distributed to Councils over the next four years to support businesses facing large increases as a result of the 2017 revaluation as detailed in Appendix A to the report. This scheme is designed and implemented by each local authority. Government has announced grant support for this until 2020/21.

- Supporting Small Businesses – From the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 the thresholds for Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR) have been changed which combined with the revaluation resulted in some businesses facing large increases in the amount payable. This scheme operates for the period 2017/18 to 2021/22.
- Public Houses Relief Scheme – Eligible public house with a rateable value of less than £100K will receive up to £1,000 discount on their bill in 2017/18. This is a one year scheme only.

The Government will refund the cost of these to Councils through Section 31 grants up to the limits set in the determination. In regard to the Discretionary Revaluation Relief scheme the grant payment reflects the portion of overall income that would be retained under the 50% business rate retention scheme. The Government has also stipulated that the grant has to be spent in the year that it is awarded, i.e. no carry-forward between financial years. DCLG have announced the available amount for 2017/18

<b>Total Fund announced by Government</b>	<b>Amount of Income to be reimbursed under the rates retention scheme, i.e. 50% retained growth- to be funded through S31 Grant</b>
370,000	185,155

Indicative allocations for future years are detailed in the table below

<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>
£000s	£000s	£000s
180	74	11

RESOLVED that:

- i) the Revaluation Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme for 2017/18 as set out below be approved :-

Proposals for the Revaluation Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme

The proposed scheme for Harborough is based on the following key principles

- Include only the properties with rateable values less than £199,000 (focusing on Small Businesses – this was the threshold in the governments consultation) where there has been an increase in RV over 12.5% .The new transitional relief (TR) scheme reduces down the rates payable by phasing in rateable value increases over the life of the 5 year rating list. If there is still an amount to pay after the TR scheme is applied then they should be included in the list of potentially eligible ratepayers under the new DR scheme;
- Only apply to occupied properties (as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017).
- District, County Council and Parish/Town council accounts excluded;
- Ratepayers in receipt of mandatory and/or discretionary relief excluded;

- Ratepayers in receipt of Small Business Rate Relief excluded;
- Excluding those accounts that will benefit from the budget change which supports those ratepayers that have lost or have reduced small business rate relief or rural rate relief because of the revaluation i.e. increase no more than £600 in year;
- Exclude certain Valuation Office property codes/descriptions (as detailed in Appendix B to the report)

This has identified an estimated 518 properties as being eligible under this grant. The total relief for these properties under the scheme is estimated to be £330,100.33. It has been possible to grant 100% of the increase in rates payable to these cases. This is within the £370k allocation and therefore provides headroom for in year adjustments and challenges.

In order for a business to be awarded the relief they need to confirm in a state aid declaration that they are not 'caught' by state aid rules under the de-minimis rule which enables government bodies (including Councils) to provide support that does not exceed 200,000 euros over a three year period. It is anticipated that the size of businesses identified for this relief will not be caught by state aid rules. If however, there are any businesses subject to the state aid rules the onus is on the ratepayer to return a state aid declaration form advising the council of the amounts awarded. If it exceeds the legal thresholds, the Discretionary Rate Relief will be removed.

Any residual amount in funding from identified businesses will be retained in case of any changes in rateable value and any backdating by the valuation office. There would also be the possibility that additional amounts could be granted in hardship cases. Under this scheme these would be delegated to the S151 Officer to approve after receiving advice from the Revenues Operational Manager.

- ii) the design and application of the scheme for 2018/19 to 2020/21 be delegated to the S151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance.
- iii) the application of any hardship awards linked to this relief scheme be delegated to the S151 Officer.
- iv) any changes to the scheme detailed in (i) above, be delegated to the S151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, as a result of change in rateable value and to maximise the rate relief available through the grant.

### Summary of Reasons

The Council as the billing authority is responsible for granting business rate reliefs. In respect of the Revaluation Discretionary Rate Relief the Council is responsible for the design and implementation of the scheme.

The meeting closed at 6.37 pm