

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL on

Monday 19 December 2022 commencing at 6.30 p.m.

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

Present:

Councillor Bannister (Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs Ackerley, Bateman, Beadle, Bilbie, Dr Bremner, Burrell, Champion (until 20.51), Critchley, Dann, Dunton (until 20.51), Elliott, Golding (until 20.51), Graves, Hallam, Hollick, James, Johnson, King, Knowles, Liquorish (until 20.51), Modha, Nunn, Mrs Page, Rickman, Mrs Robinson, Sarfas, Mrs Simpson, Whelband, Whitmore and Mrs Wood

Officers present: D. Atkinson, S. Baldwin, L. Elliott (remotely), S. Hamilton, C. Mason and C. Pattinson

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Bannister announced that he had attended a number of civic events since the last meeting in June including the Remembrance Day Parade, the Market Harborough Christmas Light 'switch on' visiting the Brownies at their camp and in judging at the 'Festive Tractors' event in Lutterworth on their annual charity run. He thanked the Councillors for their support in their attendance at the Civic Service in October and the Civic Christmas Carol Service. He highlighted the privilege of receiving the Lord Left Lieutenant at the Tree of Trees Ceremony where one of the five trees received for the county from Buckingham Palace was planted at Welland Park, as a part of the Queens Green Canopy.

Councillor Bannister thanked Councillor Mahal, who was unable to make the meeting, for her support as Vice-Chairman and made reference to the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 20 September 2022. He also congratulated Councillor Mahal on her appointment Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire. He extended a warm welcome to Geraldine Whitmore who had recently been elected as a Member.

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

RESOLVED that the order in which agenda items be considered is amended so that items 7(a) (cabinet recommendations on Strategic Partnership), 11 (Council tax base), 12 (Safeguarding) and 13 (strategic partnership) be received between items 5 and 6. Council voted unanimously in favour.

DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were none.

MINUTES

In respect of the ordinary meeting of Council on 20 June 2022, Councillor Johnson requested clarification on which group 'Mental Health Market Harborough' refers to on page two of the minutes.

Councillor Knowles highlighted concern that a full Council had not been convened for over 180 days. He also asked for an update on the 'Citizens Cup' referred to on page five.

Councillor Bannister assured Councillors Johnson and Knowles that they would receive an update via email regarding these two points.

It was **moved by Councillor Bannister, seconded by Councillor King** and
RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on the 20 June 2022 be received and adopted.

Councillor Bannister asked for a proposer for the acceptance of the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 13 September 2022 as he was not present.

It was **moved by Councillor King, seconded by Councillor Knowles** and
RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Council held on the 13 September 2022 be received and adopted.

REPORT OF THE LEADER

The Leader congratulated Councillor Mahal on her appointment as the Deputy Commissioner of Police and Crime for Leicestershire and thanked Councillors and Colleagues for their work and attendance at the Tree of Trees Ceremony in Welland Park, a lasting commemoration of the life of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. He also thanked the South Leicestershire Wombles Group for collecting 100,000 bags of litter from the roadside and public spaces in all weathers across South Leicestershire and highlighted his concern at this level of non-biodegradable litter being deposited by residents.

The Leader commented on the Air Quality Status Report for 2021, discussed by Cabinet in November, noting the annual recorded nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) results did not exceed the annual mean air quality standard in Lutterworth and that air monitors in Kibworth Beachem and Harcourt did not record any exceedances of air quality objectives of Nitrogen Dioxide or particular matter. He observed that the results

reflected that there was less car transport pollution over this period due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and that the results of the analysis after 2023 will be monitored to see how and if this has changed, whether the downward trajectory will continue and what the long-term outcome of this will be.

The Leader informed Council that he had received a detailed briefing about the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This briefing note would be distributed to Members from the Head of Economic Development over the coming days. Information on how the funding will be administered will be provided in 2023. Further, detail on the Local Government Finance Settlement had been received and was broadly in line with what was expected.

The Leader welcomed Government confirmation that, from 1 January 2023 until 31 March 2023 there will be cheaper bus fares, capped at £2.00, which all of the bus companies in the area would be taking part in. He also confirmed that there will be a new law, called 'Martin's Law', introduced to secure stronger protection in public spaces from terrorism.

Finally, the Leader noted the recent update from the Lutterworth Steering Group for the Fielding Palmer Hospital that NHS England will, in 2023, consider a pre-consultation business case which will look at utilising space for community services. When there is more information, it will be shared with Members.

The Queen's Jubilee

The Council provided £700,00 of Platinum Jubilee Capital Grants Fund to support new significant capital assets across the district as a lasting commemoration of the Platinum Jubilee. £630,000 was allocated by a Cabinet sub-committee for grants as follows:

- Great Glen Parish Council - £70,000 - inclusive play and gym equipment;
- Claybrooke Magna Parish Council - £70,000 - Jubilee footpath walk.
- South Kilworth Parish Council – £70,000 - Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA);
- Lutterworth Church - £70,000 - community centre renovation;
- Lutterworth Town Council - £70,000 – accessible play equipment;
- Ashby Parva Village Hall - £70,000 - multi-functional garden;
- All Saints Church, Gilmorton - £70,000 - inner porch and an internal community area;
- Houghton Field Association (HFA) - £70,000 – Jubilee footpath;
- Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council - £70,000 – Jubilee Walk.

The Leader thanked everyone who applied, and those who determined the applications. He noted that trees are a particular part of the living legacy in honour of HM Queen Elizabeth II, with over a million trees planted across the UK as part of the Queen's Green Canopy - an initiative to plant trees to mark the Platinum Jubilee in 2022. The 69-foot-tall Tree of Trees sculpture in front of Buckingham Palace during the Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June 2022 contained 350 saplings. One of these, a rowan, was received by the Council and was ceremonially planted on

Thursday 15 December 2022, in Welland Park, Market Harborough near the Covid Memorial Tree, in an accessible location, just off Welland Park Road.

The special pot from the Tree of Trees, embossed with the Queen's cypher, in which the sapling was delivered to the Council, will be planted with smaller rowan saplings each year, which will then be gifted to parish councils in the district once established.

Ukrainian refugees

The Leader praised the ongoing response of the district following the unwarranted invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces. Support was sent to countries neighbouring Ukraine and the district now has over 200 refugees. He thanked all those involved in supporting the refugees and confirmed the Council would continue to work closely with community groups across the district as well as the County Council on this matter.

Greener and Cleaner

More information was provided by the Leader about his visit to the South Leicestershire Litter Wombles. The group was established in 2019 and is made up of around 500 active volunteers who litter pick across South Leicestershire and Leicester. The Council supplies the litter bags and kit to the group and it's contractor, FCC Environment, removes the full bags of rubbish and takes them for disposal or recycling. The Leader was keen to ensure the council tackled the amount of litter dropped.

Air Quality update

The Leader noted that there are no new areas in the district which are considered to breach air quality standards. Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts and particularly affects the most vulnerable in society such as children, older people and those with existing heart and lung conditions. In addition to traffic reduction due to the Covid 19 pandemic, other factors thought to have contributed to the reduction in air pollution are the HGV gating system and the increased use of electric vehicles.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

The Leader confirmed Harborough District will benefit from £2,172,095 of investment from this government fund over 2 ½ years to improve communities and places, support local business, and invest in people and skills. £1m will be put towards delivery of the Lutterworth and Market Harborough town centre masterplans, which will include improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure, as well as minor improvements to the centres of the four larger villages: Broughton Astley, Kibworth, Fleckney and Great Glen. £468,000 will support the local business sector, including town centre retail businesses and tourism, as well as funding business advice, including grants for small businesses. £140,000 – will help to support people to access employment and develop their skills through training courses.

The Leader concluded his remarks by wishing everyone, a Happy Christmas and New Year and thanks to everyone behind the superb range of festive events around the district.

Comments on the Leader's report

Councillor Knowles asked the following questions:

- £630,000 of the Platinum Jubilee Capital Grants Fund awarded from the £700,000 allocated - what will the remaining £70,000 be used for? Could it be used for other schemes across the district that need funding?
- Will those who partake in fly-tipping and littering in the Harborough district be dealt with properly?
- What assurance is there in relation to monitoring air quality?.
- Are the Council are endorsing the capped bus rate fares proposed by the Government in the Harborough District?
- When will Council receive an update on voter ID and the finances?
- Will information be circulated about warm hubs and accessing the Leisure Centre?

Councillor Graves asked why the UKSPF breakdown of figures is £560,000 short and where has the remaining money been spent, commenting that he had submitted an FOI request to explore this but still awaits a response.

Councillor Sarfas asked why the Leader had not supported the saving of the Fielding Palmer Hospital and expressed concern about the air quality in Lutterworth decreasing.

Councillor James asked what more could be done to help Ukranian Refugees in terms of employment, the ongoing need for housing and getting children into schools.

Councillor Beadle asked for clarity on the financial split between Lutterworth and Market Harborough Masterplan as regards the UK Prosperity Fund.

Leader's response

The Leader responded that:

- **UK Shared Prosperity Fund** allocations will be confirmed in 2023 and information provided to Members – it is received in yearly instalments over three years from 2022 to 2024 inclusive with deadlines as to when the money needs to be used by. Members had been briefed on the fund in summer 2022;
- **Fielding Palmer Hospital** – the Clinical Commissioning Group were not willing to meet with Ward Members and instead set up the Lutterworth Steering Group which representatives from the local area were invited to join. The work has been delayed during the Covid-19 pandemic;

- **Air Quality** - the report was sent to cabinet, a media release was issued and the information can be accessed via the Council's website;
- **Ukrainian Refugees** - job recruitment events were being held by HDC to aid in this, and these will continue in 2023. Education is the responsibility of individual academies and the County Council. The Leader highlighted the shortage of property for rent in order to house the refugees.
- **Voter ID** was announced by the government the week before the meeting. At this time there is no further information on this but it will be distributed to members when it is made available
- **Warm hubs** in the HDC building isn't actually very warm;
- **Platinum Jubilee Grants** – no decision has been made on the unspent £70,000 s fund;
- **Littering and fly-tipping** has decreased, £150 fixed notice penalties have been given to offenders but this is also about what other partners are going to do about this;
- **Air quality monitoring** – no guarantees can be given but any mbut if there is an area that a Member is particularly concerned about, this can be raised through the member enquiries email channel.

QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS SUBMITTED BY THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the Public.

The Chairman accepted and drew attention to a petition of 326 signatures received supporting the development of the open space in Northampton Road, Market Harborough as a "Jubilee Garden" in memory of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. As there was no member of the Public in attendance to present this petition, Councillor Bannister invited a speaker to present from the Council.

It was **moved by Councillor Bannister, and seconded by Councillor James** and

RESOLVED that the Council commission further investigation into the background of this petition and ask the Communities Scrutiny Panel to undertake further work and reporting on it, with a decision to be made by the Communities Scrutiny Panel on the petition in due course.

REPORT ON THE COUNCIL TAX BASE 2023/24

Councillor Hallam introduced the report and outlined the calculation and detail around the Council Tax Base for 2023/24. He outlined the changes in Council Tax charges, including increasing its irrecoverable rate from 1% to 2% during the Covid-19 pandemic and recommended that this rate continue for 2023/24 due to the cost-of-living crisis and potential recession. The Council heard and considered the report.

It was **moved by Councillor Hallam, seconded by Councillor King** and

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) **the calculation of the Council Tax base for the year 2023/24 be approved;**
- (ii) **in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 SI 2012/2914, the amount calculated by Harborough District Council as its Council Tax base for the year 2023/24 shall be 38,251.46 and**
- (iii) **the Council Tax base for individual Parishes for 2023/24 be calculated in accordance with the same principles as the Council's overall Council Tax Base as detailed in Appendix A.**

THE ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD AND SAFEGAURDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP

Councillor Dann introduced the reports. He highlighted the focus of the report including encouraging individuals to live more independent lives with the right support and guidance in place, addressing physical and mental health needs to prevent crisis and support those who are most vulnerable in our communities including those that face loneliness, food, and fuel poverty and those that need support to remain in their own homes.

It was **moved by Councillor Dann, seconded by Councillor Whelband** and

RESOLVED that the annual report of the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Adults Board to increase awareness and identify issues relevant to the district and was NOTED.

Due to the administrative omission of the associated appendix of the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report it was

RESOLVED that the Leicestershire And Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual report be DEFERRED to the February 2023 Council meeting.

The interim Chief Executive left the meeting prior to consideration of the subsequent item.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET

1. Strategic Partnership Between Harborough District Council and Melton Borough Council

Councillor King was invited to introduce the recommendations of the Cabinet from its meeting on the 5 December 2022, to be considered in conjunction with Agenda item 13 - Officer's report on the Strategic Partnership between Harborough District Council and Melton Borough Council and a comprehensive debate took place.

Councillor King requested a recorded vote to consider Recommendations i to ix as detailed in the report which was supported by more than four other Members.

On being put to the vote the Resolutions i to ix were lost.

Recorded vote

For: Cllrs Bannister, Bateman, Bilbie, Dr Bremner, Champion, Critchley, Dann, Golding, Hallam, Hollick, King, Liquorish, Nunn, Rickman and Whelband (15)

Against: Cllrs Ackerley, Beadle, Burrell, Dunton, Elliott, Graves, James, Johnson, Knowles, Modha, Mrs Page, Mrs Robinson, Sarfas, Mrs Simpson, Whitmore and Mrs Wood (16)

The Chairman advised that as entry into a strategic partnership with Melton Borough Council was not resolved, Council would need to address the extension of the appointment of Elizabeth Elliott as Interim Chief Executive, Head of Paid Service, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer until 28 February 2023.

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

RESOLVED that the appointment of Elizabeth Elliott as Interim Chief Executive, Head of Paid Service, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer be extended until 28 February 2023.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS

- i. The following question was submitted by **Councillor Knowles to Councillor King**:

“With the reduction of the number of full councils it has seen a reduction in the numbers of questions and notices of motions permitted by an individual councillor each year. Would the Leader be willing to consider steps to allow two questions and two notices of motion from an individual member at each full Council?”

The **Leader responded** that:

- there has been no reduction in the number of questions an individual member can ask or motions on notice they can propose at each meeting;
- members can ask questions at Cabinet and other committees of the Council and to bring motions forward at those;
- a review of Council governance generally is under way, including a review of the Constitution. Any changes to be made will therefore be considered firstly by the Constitution Review Committee, Cabinet and Council therefore comments should be addressed to them to raise any suggestions for changes to the Councils standing orders when they are considered.

ii. The following question was submitted by **Councillor Nunn to Councillor Whelband**:

“During the pandemic voluntary sector organisations across the district worked very hard, in challenging circumstances, to continue to provide services to the most vulnerable people in our community for which they must be great applauded.

Can I ask what support have we given to these organisations, to restore the service delivery and increase volunteering opportunities, including any financial support either directly or indirectly for example by assisting with grant applications?”

Cllr Whelband responded as follows:

- In 2021/22, £24,285.45 has been provided to organisations:
 - o Supporting village halls, community sports halls and community centres to re- open
 - o Parishes, voluntary or community groups have been engaged in helping vulnerable people through our community hub
 - o Improvements or provision of outdoor facilities
 - o Mental health fund to build capacity/ support new projects that help support resident’s wellbeing across the whole of the district experiencing mental health distress
 - o Improve spaces and places that are important to the community.
- Appendix A details further information on amount of Community Grants given;
- £21,721.39 has been provided for Jubilee grants (memorials and events).
- A list of available external grants is included in monthly updates to Parishes and voluntary groups via email. The Council was unable to advise how many external grants were applied for by organisations from

this information or the amount of funding leveraged in by organisations as a direct result of matched funding.

- iii. The following question was submitted by **Councillor James to Councillor King**:

“Please can you inform me of the numbers of full-time staff who have left the employment of this Council over the past 12 months also indicating which areas of the Council have been affected?”

The **Leader responded** as follows:

HDC Full time leavers from December 2021 to December 2022	
Full time	No. of people
Building control	2
Lifeline	3
Communications & Marketing	1
Community Partnerships	7
Corporate Services	1
Customer Services & Engagement	1
Development Management	5
Economy & Business	2
Facilities	1
Finance Services	2
Legal & Democratic	1
Regulatory Services	4
Revenue & Benefits *	5
Strategic Planning	1
Chief Executive	1
Total	37

He reminded Members that this is a snap shot. It does not take account of part time staff who have moved on, or those who have left the authority via TUPE arrangements, or those being put at the disposal of a joint arrangement.

REPORT FROM THE CABINET

Councillor King introduced the report from the Cabinet, detailing the Decisions taken by Cabinet from 4 July 2022, 10 October 2022, 14 November 2022 and 5 December 2022, which was **NOTED**.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2022

Councillor King introduced the recommendation of the Constitutional Review Committee from its meeting on the 30 November 2022 in respect of amendments to

the constitution of the Council in connection with the recruitment of temporary and interim statutory and chief officers at Part 4, Section 8: Officer Employment Procedure Rules Para. 5 & 12 of the constitution.

It was **moved by Councillor King, seconded by Councillor Dann** and
RESOLVED that the proposed amendments to the Constitution set out in Appendix B (i) and (ii) be adopted.

REPORT ON JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

There was no report for consideration.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

The **Scrutiny Commissioner, Councillor Mrs Page**, presented the Annual Scrutiny report which included an extract of the draft minutes of the Scrutiny Commission meeting on this item as Appendix A to the report, which provided the context, summary of discussion and reference to the proposed Scrutiny Review.

NOTICES OF MOTION

There were none.

URGENT ITEMS

There were none.

The Meeting closed at 21.10