

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING

held at
Council Chamber, The Symington Building, Adam and Eve Street,
Market Harborough, LE16 7AG

6th March 2023

commencing at 5.30pm

Present:

Councillors: Bateman, Dann, Hallam, King (Chair) and Whelband

Officers: D. Atkinson, E. Bird, C. Bland, L Elliott, S. Hamilton, V. Jessop, C Mason,
C. Pattinson. R. Smith and D Wright

INFORMATION EXCHANGE FROM PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Wellbeing, Communities and Housing

Councillor Whelband reported on recent Section 106 contributions for Market Harborough highlighting the part-funding of the resurfacing of the canal tow path project together with the Canals and Rivers Trust, associated with Airfield Farm (the remaining funds from Sustrans) and also that £1.3million of contributions have been collected towards new infrastructure in the District.

Finance

Councillor Hallam reported that the 2023/24 budget had been approved at the February 2023 Council meeting, enabling a zero percentage increase to the 2023/24 Council tax to be agreed. Also a balanced Medium Term Financial strategy for the period 2024/25 to 2027/28 as agreed, including the potential to invest £2.8 million into the local community in support of environmental, housing and town centre master planning. Capital projects included the refurbishment of the two leisure centres, £10 million for the new waste depot and £270k over four years for green environmental grants.

Planning, Environment and Waste

Councillor Bateman reported that Green waste subscriptions for the 2023/24 year opened on 1st February 2023, and the subscription level for the first three weeks was c. 9,200, an increase of 2,000 based on the same period the previous year. It was noted that a small number of complaints had been received which are being resolved with the customers.

Over £200,000 had been received in relation to planning fees for quarter three, resulting in approximately £900,000 for the full year. It was noted that the government

is looking to uplift planning fees by 35% later in the year.

Councillor Bateman highlighted that the Great British Clean is taking place from the 17th March to 2nd April which will be promoted by the Council. Also during the week commencing 27th February, the new state of the art Changing Places toilets were opened in Welland Park in Market Harborough.

Corporate & Regulatory Services

Councillor Dann reported that the new induction programme has been confirmed for the forthcoming new administration post the elections. Good progress is being made in updating the Council's constitution in line with best practice.

Good progress is being made towards the 'Paper-lite approach to Council meetings for the start of the new administration, including the use of the CMIS App to annotate Committee meetings etc.

Preparations are progressing well for the forthcoming elections, with the formal elections process commencing on the 22nd March 2023. Widespread promotion of voter ID is being undertaken. Checking and receipt sessions will take place at Lutterworth Town Council on the 27th March, Billesdon village hall on 29th March and in Kibworth Grammar School on the 3rd April, all these events will run from 16.30 – 19.00.

Strategy

Councillor King reported that the Harborough Jobs Fair would take place on the 14th March between 15.00 and 18.00 in the Council buildings in Market Harborough. Earlier on the 6th March, he had attended the Cox Automotive Open Day at the Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground.

He also reported that the Council had been able to provide litter picking implements to a group of volunteers who undertake litter picking within the District.

TOPICAL ISSUES

There were none.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor King declared an interest in relation to item Agenda item 8, Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact as he is a County Councillor and a co-signatory of the Nature Pact is Leicestershire County Council.

MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 6th February 2023 be approved as a correct record.

2022/23 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT – OUTTURN QUARTER 3 (YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2023)

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which set out the financial position (outturn) for the year ending 31 March 2023, based on information at the end of December for revenue and capital. Based on the financial position as at 31 December 2022, given known income and expenditure commitments and working assumptions :- Revenue is forecasting an overspend of £578k (quarter 2 £810k), a variance of 4.8% to the approved budget; and Capital is forecasting an underspend of £300k.

RESOLVED that the financial performance report and comments on the Forecast Outturn (31st March 2023) as detailed within the report and associated appendices be considered.

Reasons for Recommendations

Good financial governance requires the Cabinet to consider and comment on the forecast financial outturn for 2022/23. Such commentary demonstrates to customers, partners, and stakeholders that the Council is actively considering the financial environment within which the Council is operating.

LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION: WASTE AND ENVIRONMENTAL MAINTENANCE SERVICES

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which proposed to share Harborough District Council's Head of Environmental Services and three Team Leaders with Melton Borough Council ("MBC") through leadership collaboration.

HDC and MBC are similar size authorities in land coverage and demographics. Each faces similar issues in the delivery of Environmental Services (i.e Waste Management, Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing, optional Enforcement and Community Safety). The councils have discussed, at management and staff level what, if any, aspects of the service could be delivered collaboratively. Each operates the same waste collection system - alternate weekly collection of refuse and recycling in addition to a chargeable garden waste service. MBC retains an in-house grounds maintenance team while HDC contracts this function out. Both councils contract out the street cleaning service and use the same company to move recycle from their respective depots to Casepak.

The purpose of collaborative management is to create better resilience, both through financial and staff resources; ensuring the continued expected service levels for both authorities. In this instance, the service areas that are in scope for both councils would be Waste Management, Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing. In the

event that the collaboration is successful, it is anticipated that a collaborative approach would also be beneficial for each authority in respect of the enforcement function.

The proposed approach would create a better depth of expertise, more strategic oversight and enable both teams to deliver better.

Councillor Knowles had requested to speak on the item, and commented that the report and the 'Collaboration of Regulatory Services' report seemed to be contradictory to the decision taken at the December 2022 Council meeting in regards to the Strategic Partnership between Melton Borough Council and Harborough District Council report. He asked why the report was being expedited prior to the forthcoming elections by the Cabinet and proposed that both the report and the 'Collaboration of Regulatory Services' report be deferred and the decision taken by a subsequent full Council meeting.

The Leader clarified that the proposals in the two reports were not related to the decision taken by the Council on the 19th December, and there are many examples of services which are managed on HDC's behalf and vice versa. The Leader also highlighted that the informal arrangement has been in place for some time and there will be an initial trial for six months. He advised that the decision for the proposal rests with the Cabinet as detailed within the Council's constitution.

RESOLVED that:

- i. Leadership collaboration be authorised for Waste and Environmental Maintenance Services, through a shared Head of Service / Assistant Director for Waste and Environment, for an initial 6-month period from 1st April 2023 with Melton Borough Council.
- ii. Authority be delegated to the Director for Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Chief Executive, Director for Corporate Services and Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environmental Services and Waste Management to:
 - a. Agree the terms of the reciprocal arrangement for leadership collaboration with Melton Borough Council and record the same in a memorandum of understanding;
 - b. Determine and conclude the practical actions required to give lawful effect to the leadership collaboration agreement;
 - c. Review the leadership collaboration arrangements by 1 October 2023; and
 - d. Determine whether to continue, by agreement with Melton Borough Council, the leadership collaboration arrangements;

- e. Determine whether to extend the scope of the leadership collaboration.

Reasons for Recommendations

Sharing of services with a partner has been actively considered and explored to build capacity and mitigate against future staffing issues or specific operation pressures.

By sharing resources, ideas, campaigns and good working practices, there will be the ability to make savings and save officer time, furthering the following objectives:

- strengthening each council and promoting shared leadership of the two authorities and shared working within Leicestershire as a whole.
- enhancing organisational effectiveness: opportunity to share learning and good practice and through collaboration whilst increasing service resilience, stability and effectiveness.
- increasing opportunities for job enrichment, growth and development and improve recruitment and retention.
- improving financial resilience: realising efficiencies through joint working, reducing duplication, increasing purchasing power and achieving greater value for money.
- procurement efficiencies.

COLLABORATION OF REGULATORY SERVICES

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report highlighting that in line with the council's corporate vision and the furtherance of operational mutual aid provided between the council and Melton Borough Council since July 2022, discussions had taken place in respect of formalising the operational joint working provided by the Head of Regulatory Services to Melton Borough Council.

The joint working to date has been proved to increase resilience of the regulatory teams within both councils as well as maintaining financial performance and service levels. The councils continue to share experiences and expertise for their mutual benefit, and wish to record the informal arrangements that have been in place on a more formal basis.

The report proposed that a formal arrangement would commence on 1 April 2023 and be reviewed after 12 months including a review of any wider sharing opportunities within the teams. The mechanism for this arrangement is proposed to be via an agreement under section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972. This is required to enable the Head of Regulatory Services to operate legally within the Melton Borough Council district.

A reciprocal arrangement is proposed between Regulatory Services officers to enable each team to assist the other, subject to expertise and availability.

RESOLVED that:

- i. It be agreed that the Regulatory Services Team may work collaboratively with Melton Borough Council for the efficient delivery of regulatory services;
- ii. Authority be delegated to the Director of Governance and Law, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Planning & Environment, and Corporate & Regulatory Services and Wellbeing, Communities & Housing to:
 - a. Agree the terms of the reciprocal arrangement for mutual aid with Melton Borough Council and record the same in a memorandum of understanding;
 - b. Determine and conclude the practical actions required to give lawful effect to the mutual aid arrangement.

Reasons for Recommendations

The Regulatory Services team has a track record of working with counterparts at Melton Borough Council to build in capacity in both councils, and mitigate against staffing issues or specific operational pressures by sharing resources, ideas, campaigns and good working practices. This helps both councils to maximise:

- Organisational effectiveness: opportunity to share learning and good practice through collaboration whilst increasing service resilience, stability and effectiveness;
- Workforce: increasing opportunities for job enrichment, growth and development thereby improving recruitment and retention;
- Financial resilience: realising efficiencies through joint working, reducing duplication, and achieving greater value for money.

The scope of this arrangement is limited to operational matters only. There will be no impact upon strategic and policy oversight of the council.

AUTHORITY MONITORING REPORT 2021/2022

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report highlighting that the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) 2021/22 assesses the effectiveness of planning policies contained within the Harborough District Local Plan, the relevant critical outcomes within the Councils' Corporate Plan 2022-2031 as well as the implementation of the Local Development Scheme and the Duty to Cooperate. The AMR covers the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 and is a factual document.

Following a discussion it was:

RESOLVED that the contents of the Authority Monitoring Report for 2021/22 be noted and it be noted that it will be published.

Reasons for Recommendations

Production of an AMR is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Order Act 2004 (as amended by the 2011 Localism Act) and The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

The monitoring of housing targets set in the Local Plan is also identified as a Key Activity in the Council's Corporate Plan. This AMR also reports on the implementation of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) which sets out the timetable for plan-making in the district.

LEICESTERSHIRE CLIMATE AND NATURE PACT

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report detailing the Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact which sets out key principles for organisations in Leicestershire to sign up to work together to deliver on delivery of action.

The Pact is a high-level commitment that supports action across all sectors. All organisations are being asked to sign up to the pact, with Local Government being a vital early adopter. The Pact recognises that delivery on the climate and nature emergencies is not something that one organisation can deliver alone.

RESOLVED that the signing of the Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact set out in Appendix A to the report be approved.

Reasons for Recommendations

Harborough District Council has adopted its Climate Action Plan, but recognises that acting alone, it can only impact a relatively small portion of the emissions from the district. The council recognises the benefits of collaboration with other agencies to move towards net zero emissions across the district.

The collaborative approach of the Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact supports the delivery of the council's climate action plan.

Signing the Pact highlights the leadership commitment of the council to delivering the climate action plan, including the recent collaborative working with the Leicestershire districts on projects such as Solar Together.

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ALLOCATION OF UK SHARED PROSPERITY AND RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUNDING

The Leader introduced the report which set out the proposed governance arrangements for allocation of £2,172,095 UK Shared Prosperity ("UKSPF") and £709,681 Rural England Prosperity Funding ("REPF"), received from the government.

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RESOLVED that:

- i. The work that has been done so far to submit the Council's proposals for UK Shared Prosperity Funding and Rural England Prosperity Funding be noted; and
- ii. The terms attached to the funding as set out at Appendix 2 to the report be noted;
- iii. Authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council to:
 - a. Commission, negotiate, award and enter into and vary such arrangements and legal agreements as may be necessary or appropriate to implement the Investment Plans for UKSPF and REPF funding; and
 - b. Negotiate such changes to the Investment Plans, as may be necessary or appropriate to secure efficient and effective delivery of the UKSPF and REPF.

Reasons for Recommendations

The guidelines for spending the funding and recording outputs, outcomes and impacts of the funding are complex and require a detailed understanding of, and regular liaison with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to ensure compliance. Officers need the ability to be flexible to respond to changing circumstances and make speedy decisions, within the overall priorities and themes of the Investment Plans, in order to avoid potential delivery failure, having to return funding to central government and ensure that the requirements of the funding are met.

TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS OF SPECIAL URGENCY

There were none.

The meeting ended at 18.21