

# HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF COUNCIL on

**Monday 18 September 2023** commencing at 6.30 p.m.

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

Present: Councillor Johnson (Chairman)

Councillors: Anderson, Asher, Bannister, Bilbie, Birch, Dann, Elliott (Vice-Chairman), Finan, Gair, Galton, Grafton-Reed, Graves, Hallam, Hollick, James, King, Knight, Knowles, Mahal, Modha, Mrs Page, Rickman, Sarfas, Taylor, Whelband, Whitmore, Woodiwiss, and Worrell.

Officers present: L. Elliot, C. Mason, C.Pattinson, V. Jessop, E. Newman, K. Parsons, C. Elsasser

## 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Bateman, Beadle, Burrell, Forman and Nunn.

## 2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Johnson gave a summary of events she had attended since the last Council Meeting. Council agreed that the order of the agenda be changed so:

- Item 11(b) becomes 11(a) to reflect the date of receipt of the motions
- item 13 (appointment of the Chief Executive) is moved up to become Item 8
- Item 14 (Statement of Common Ground) is moved up to become Item 9

## 3. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Hallam declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item 9, Statement of Common Ground, arising from his interest in land.

Councillors King, Page, Bannister and Galton declared other registerable interests in relation to the Leader's report as County Councillors for Leicestershire County Council, which is a tenant in the Symington Building.

#### **4. MINUTES**

The Chairman suggested some minor spelling and grammatical errors that were to be corrected and it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of 24 July 2023 were an accurate and correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

#### **5. REPORT OF THE LEADER**

Councillor Knowles provided a written report to Members which he summarised verbally. Councillors asked questions regarding:

- when the full coalition agreement would be available to Councillors;
- whether an update on the Member's Advisory Group (MAG) could be provided to Members;
- if there was a dangerous dog Protection Order in place for open spaces,;
- if a meeting could be set up to address and explore opportunities for banking services;
- provision of further information on health services in the area; and
- whether it would be possible to set up a meeting between traders and the Council.

Councillor Knowles explained that he recognised the need for answers to the various questions and regarding MAG, as Councillor Galton was now Vice Chair, he would try to provide an update and encourage more open dialogue. Councillor Knowles acknowledged that more communication was required with the traders and that more conversations were needed around the banking hub to identify the impacts on the district as well.

Regarding the question on dangerous dog breeds, Councillor Knowles agreed to provide a written answer that would be circulated to Members.

#### **6. QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS SUBMITTED BY THE PUBLIC**

There was a question submitted by Mr David Campbell-Kelly and the answer was provided to councillors in the Supplementary Agenda for the meeting. Mr Campbell-Kelly asked the following supplementary question:

Are the two strategic documents (strategic transport assessment and strategic growth options) being suppressed because they don't support the plans? Can officers confirm my cynicism is unjustified?

He was informed that a written response would be provided.

## **7. QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS**

There were several questions from Councillors. These were published in the agenda.

Answers to the questions were published in the supplementary agenda.

Answers to supplementary questions are summarised as follows with the full answers being published in a separate document on the meeting web page.

### **a. Question from Councillor Hallam to the Leader**

Councillor Hallam's question related to a comment made at the last meeting of the full Council by Cllr Sarfas in respect of the state of the Council.

The Leader confirmed his confidence in the Council's officers and the budget adopted in February 2023 which the administration continued to manage the Council in accordance with.

Councillor Hallam did not raise a supplementary question.

### **b. Question from Councillor Mrs Page to the Leader**

Councillor Page's question related to securing the best possible healthcare services for the Lutterworth locality following the closure of the Fielding Palmer Hospital and sought assurance future healthcare provision for the area of Lutterworth is sufficient and takes account of her concerns.

The Leader confirmed officers were meeting with the relevant service providers and that he would provide a more detailed response in writing, which would be circulated to all councillors.

### **c. Question from Councillor King to the Leader**

Councillor King's question revolved around four-day working weeks.

The Leader responded that he was committed to doing what was in the best interest of the residents and taxpayers of the district but that it was premature make any decision on the four day working week trials had concluded.

In response to Councillor King's supplementary question as to whether any decision on introducing a four day week would be taken by Council, Cabinet or delegated to an officer, Councillor Knowles confirmed that he would not wish to deal with this matter by delegation.

**d. Question from Councillor Whelband to the Portfolio Holder for Environmental and Climate Change**

Councillor Whelband's question related to the Council's attendance at the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel meetings and training session.

Councillor Woodiwiss advised Council of the reason he was unable to attend the meetings referred to and gave details of meetings he had attended.

In response to a supplementary question, Councillor Woodiwiss agreed to provide Councillor Whelband with details of the training he had undertaken.

**e. Question from Councillor Bannister to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change**

Councillor Bannister asked for confirmation of the number and location of recycling bins available for shoppers and residents in the district.

Councillor Woodiwiss confirmed that all households had at least one recycling receptacle and a fortnightly kerbside collection and there were "bring" sites at a number of locations for various items. There is one set of recycling bins in the district in Market Harborough.

Councillor Bannister asked a supplemental question in respect of the provision of additional public recycling bins in the district, to which Councillor Woodiwiss responded that there are no plans to provide public recycling bins in the centres of other settlements around the district due to lack of use, contamination and cost.

**8. REPORT FROM THE CABINET**

Councillor Knowles introduced the report from Cabinet, detailing the Decisions taken by Cabinet from 4 September 2023, which was **NOTED**.

**9. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

Councillor Knowles introduced the report summarising the activities of the following Committees since the last Council meeting in July:

- Audit and Standards (26 July 2023);
- Planning Committee (12 September 2023);
- Scrutiny Commission (task and finish update).

The report was **NOTED**.

**10. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS**

Councillor Knowles introduced the report summarising the activities of organisations with which the Council has Joint Arrangements. The Leicestershire Partnership Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee minutes of a meeting on 6 July 2023 were contained in Appendix A. The report was **NOTED**.

## 11. **NOTICES OF MOTION**

Two notices of motion had been received by the Council and accepted in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules. The notices of motion were published on

### a) **Notice of Motion - Single Member Ward boundary review**

Councillor Phil King proposed the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Whelband:

That this Council authorises the appropriate officer to contact the LGBCE to seek inclusion into their latest work programme for a Single-member review of the warding arrangements for Harborough District Council.

That subject to a) being successful, namely HDC being accepted onto the LGBCE programme for a single member review, that a politically balanced review panel of this council, be constituted.

The motion was debated and put to the vote and was **LOST**.

### b) **Notice of Motion - Discharge of Sewage into Rivers, Lakes and Coastlines.**

Councillor James proposed the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Knight:

We instruct the Leader of the Council, Cllr Phil Knowles to write to the Secretary of State, The Prime Minister, with copies to each of the Members of Parliament for Harborough District informing them of the decision of this Council and the notice of motion; urging swift action and an urgent reply. We believe time is not on our side and there is No Planet B.

The motion was debated and put to the vote and was **CARRIED**.

## 12. **APPOINTMENT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Councillor Knowles introduced, as Chair of the Member Appointment Panel, the report that informed Council of the progress made towards the

appointment of a Chief Executive for the Council following a recruitment process. The report provided to Council sought confirmation that Candidate A be appointed as the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service for the Council.

Councillor Knowles confirmed that Candidate A was John Richardson, an Executive Director at Blaby District Council. Mr Richardson indicated his willingness to accept the position as Harborough District Council's Chief Executive and the Panel formally requested that Council appoint Mr Richardson as the new permanent Chief Executive, subject to satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks. The pre-employment checks would include the obtaining of satisfactory references. Once the checks were satisfied, a start date would be agreed with Mr Richardson and confirmed to Council in due course.

The report was debated and put to the vote and it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that Mr Richardson's appointment be approved subject to satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks.

### **13. HARBOROUGH LOCAL PLAN – LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND RELATING TO HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT LAND NEEDS**

Councillor Knowles introduced the report which sought Council acceptance of the Statement of Common Ground with the other planning authorities in Leicestershire in respect of housing and employment land needs. This was a formal stage in the preparation of the council's next local plan.

Councillor Knowles then proposed a motion without notice that the decision be deferred to allow a public meeting to be convened with the Members of Parliament for the district so that the proposal could be debated further, and all views heard.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Galton.

Councillor Graves moved a motion without notice in accordance with the Council procedure rules that the matter be put to an immediate vote. The motion without notice was seconded by Councillor Woodiwiss and upon being put to the vote was **CARRIED**.

The substantive motion, that consideration of the matter be deferred, was therefore put to the vote without debate and the motion was **CARRIED**.

### **14. URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

The Meeting closed at 21:10.