

## HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

### COUNCIL

15 July 2019

commencing at 6.30 p.m.

Present:

Councillor Johnson (Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs Ackerley, Bateman, Beadle, Bilbie, Dr Bremner, Mrs Burrell, Champion, Dann, Elliott, Fosker, Frenchman, Golding, Graves, Hallam (until 7.20pm), Hollick, James, Knowles, Liquorish, Mahal, Nunn, Rickman (until 7.20pm), Mrs Robinson, Sarfas, Whelband and Mrs Wood

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Bannister, Dunton, Galton, King, McHugo, Modha, Mrs Page and Mrs Simpson

### CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements regarding a significant number of events that she had recently attended and participated in, as follows:-

- 27<sup>th</sup> June Lord Mayor of Leicester's Civic Service
- 28<sup>th</sup> June Meadowdale Primary School prize giving to competition winners, attending start of Windows in Bloom organised by Harbs Collective and a Song Birds concert
- 30<sup>th</sup> June RBL Poppy Walk and encouraging children to participate in the Junior Parkrun
- 1<sup>st</sup> July Lubenham All Saints Church of England Primary School assembly
- 2<sup>nd</sup> July Husbands Bosworth Church of England School: Healthy Lifestyle poster competition with presentation of prizes to pupils
- 4<sup>th</sup> July WWI Street Sign for Garner Way, Fleckney: to recognise the service of soldier Alonza Garner
- 5<sup>th</sup> July Harborough in Bloom meeting judges from Britain in Bloom and local volunteers
- 6<sup>th</sup> July Morsbags production of 20,000 bags celebrations plus Youth Brass 2000 Concert
- 7<sup>th</sup> July Stevens Street Allotments, Classic Car Show and Great Bowden Music Fest closing Concert
- 8<sup>th</sup> July Alistair Campbell – Celebration of Life Service

### DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Hallam      Report 10 – Recommendation from Cabinet: Exempt - Land Acquisition for Development  
Councillor Hallam declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in this item as he was a personal friend of the vendor. He stated that he would retire from the meeting for this item.

Councillor Rickman

Report 10 – Recommendation from Cabinet: Exempt - Land Acquisition for Development

Councillor Rickman declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in this item as he was a personal friend of, and had also taught, the vendor. He stated that he would retire from the meeting for this item.

MINUTES

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

RESOLVED that: the Minutes of the Council meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019 be received and adopted.

REPORT OF THE LEADER

In the absence of Councillor King, Councillor Hallam, presented the Leader's report, as set out below:

Harborough Innovation Centre

We are acutely aware of the important role businesses play in our district and we're delighted to see so many start-ups navigate their way successfully through their initial years. It is important that we continue to provide this important launch pad for emerging businesses in the district, but we recognise that the way existing occupants of Harborough Innovation Centre have been informed about the need to relocate could have been handled better.

We have taken immediate steps to make sure our existing occupants are given the support and flexibility they need to make the right choices for their business as they look to find more permanent premises and I would like to apologise for any concern our initial approach may have caused. I have asked senior officers to meet with businesses at the Innovation Centre and a meeting has been arranged with the Chairman of the Innovation Centre board.

A Greener District

At the last Cabinet it was agreed that the Council should sign a new contract with Total Gas & Power Limited, to supply electricity for the Council from 1 October 2020. And with effect from 1 October 2019, the Council will be switching to use 'green energy' supplies. As well as getting value for money with this contract, the potential environmental benefits of this are clear and could build on our success in recent years of reducing our carbon emissions.

Plastic Free 'July'

This is a month-long campaign, led by the Plastic Free Foundation, to challenge millions of people around the globe to refuse single-use plastics and to make more sustainable choices in the way they live their life. As part of this campaign, and in an effort to encourage shoppers to bring a re-usable shopping bag for their market shopping, Harborough Market is giving away hundreds of re-usable shopping bags on Saturday 20 July 2019 to any customer that spends more than £1.

Many of us individually, along with the Council corporately, have signed the Plastic Pledge earlier this year, so encouraging shoppers to make just one change and reuse a non-plastic bag or to refill a drinks bottle is a great way of supporting that pledge.

Shoppers can collect their re-usable shopping bag on Saturday 20 July 2019 from 9am to 4pm with a £1 sale at any market stall (while stocks last).

Climate Change working group

Following discussions with the Monitoring officer I can confirm to Council that the Climate Change working group will operate as an Informal meeting to report comments to Council. This will be a 5

member politically balanced group with a membership: of 3 Conservative and 2 Liberal Democrats with a quorum of 3.

#### Terms of Reference:

Review the Climate Local Commitment Action Plan and report back to Council on the outcomes of the review;

The review will include but is not limited to the consideration of recycling, the use of plastics and investment in infrastructure and the role that the Council's procurement policy should play in achieving the Council's stated aim of making, as far as practicable, the Council's activities carbon neutral by 2030.

An officer working party will be established (to include the Regulatory Services Manager as lead officer) to report to the Climate Change Working Group and it is anticipated that an interim progress report will be made to Council before the end of 2019 with a final report before 30 June 2020.

#### Invest in Harborough

Despite a challenging economic climate nationally in recent years, and delay over Brexit, businesses of all sizes have continued to invest across Harborough district. From the new HQ for Joules, employing over 500 people, to Gazeley in Lutterworth investing tens of millions into new logistic centres. Harborough district is truly open for business and one of the top places to do business in the country, something which this Council is positively encouraging, from agri-research into the use of hemp plants to virtual reality headset and everything in between. Harborough District is open for business big or small.

#### Lutterworth High Street update

In the first phase of announcements last week from MHCLG we discovered that our bid for Lutterworth to the government's High Street Fund was not successful, but we have been encouraged to re-work our application and re-apply in the New Year for a further round.

#### All Change!

At the East Midlands Councils AGM, which I attended on 12 July, there was a presentation to members from Abellio who will be taking over the East Midlands rail franchise from 00.01 on the 18 August. I'm sure that we will all wish everyone involved with this every success given the £53m invested in remodelling Market Harborough station and track layout. I have asked officers to arrange for Abellio to make a presentation to all councillors at a future meeting about their plans.

#### Volunteering success

The British Red Cross and Harborough District Council ran a joint event in the Commons Car Park in Market Harborough in June during National Volunteers Week. The aim of the event was to promote the British Red Cross Community Reserve Volunteer scheme.

Approximately 10 people said they were keen to volunteer – and more people are welcome to come forward if they are keen to lend a hand. A big thank-you to them all in anticipation.

The Community Reserve Volunteer scheme is designed for anyone, aged 18 or over, who wants to help their local community if a large incident occurs, but cannot commit to volunteering with the British Red Cross on a regular basis. Volunteers go onto a list of people who can be contacted in the event of an emergency to see if they're available to help out with filling sandbags, putting together food packages etc.

#### Developers told to abide by the rules

Following residents' reporting, developers across the Harborough district have been told to ensure they are respecting residents and planning rules – or face action.

Harborough District Council has contacted all development sites in the Harborough district urging that they adhere to all conditions set out as part of planning permissions – such as permitted working hours.

Council officers will be monitoring sites to ensure developers are complying with regulations. A recent inspection on a Sunday found 2 out of 25 sites active, these were immediately dealt with.

The move follows reports by residents in some areas that developers are working outside of permitted hours. The Council has also followed up reports of unauthorised signage put up by developers.

#### Classic show wows the crowds

Last Sunday 7 July, many of you like me will have enjoyed the Classic Car Show held in the centre of Market Harborough, along with thousands of visitors.

Over 200 vintage vehicles lined the streets in the town centre, along with live music, stalls and activities for all the family. Many local businesses were open and very busy. This show is organised by the District Council and I wish to say thank you to all the staff and volunteers involved in organising this major event and ensuring that it was such a fantastic success.

Finally for those who are yet to go on their summer holidays, I wish you all a great time and see you in September if not before.

#### Comments on the Leader's report

Councillor Knowles commented that he was disappointed that the Leader's report had been distributed at a very late stage. He reiterated how successful the Classic Car Show had been and in particular how many people had attended this. He was pleased to note confirmation of the Climate Change Working Group and reported that he has shared with Officers the issue of significant amounts of plastic, approximately 20,000 tons per year, being used to wrap up bricks and has requested that this be considered and actioned accordingly by developers to reduce this. He expressed his gratitude to the volunteers involved in the Mors Bag initiative who have now made 22,000 recycled bags.

#### Harborough Innovation Centre (HIC)

Councillor Knowles expressed grave concerns regarding the HIC and in particular the perceived breakdown in communication between Harborough District Council and the HIC, as well as the lack of information to Members. Information had been brought to Members attention via the press and tenants of the Innovation Centre, advising that they were being 'evicted'.

A comprehensive briefing meeting and report to Members was requested detailing what had arisen at the HIC, and clarifying the issue relating to an aspect of the ERDF funding. Councillor Knowles reported that he had held an impromptu meeting with fifteen of the businesses and was given a petition from the businesses to pass on to the Joint Chief Executives. He congratulated Councillor King for putting a full apology on the local radio.

Additional points in relation to the HIC were raised by Councillor James as follows :-

- How many businesses have moved through the HIC, how many businesses are there currently, how long have they been there, what type of businesses are they, and has it been a commercial success for the businesses?
- Are there a lot of new businesses waiting to go to the HIC ? Is that pressure related to the 'eviction'?
- Surprise was raised that the issue relates to EU funding.
- What is Harborough District Council going to use the HIC building for?

With regard to the item entitled “Developers told to abide by the rules” information was sought as to how many rules the Council is asking Developers to abide by and which ones the Council may be letting them off. The issue relating to the Mill on the Soar junction outside Broughton Astley was raised. It was reported that the matter was brought to the Joint Chief Executive’s attention to which a letter was received in reply acknowledging that there was a planning breach in 2017 on a safety related junction failing to abide by a planning decision. The developer has recently advised that the road improvements will not be addressed until 2020.

Comment was made that this issue needs to be resolved given that there are multiple accidents at this junction. A formal request has been put to the Leader to be addressed at the next Council meeting to request an independent external investigation into the refusal to implement enforcement by developers to abide by clear conditions.

Councillor Beadle expressed his disappointment that given the Climate Emergency Declaration and the establishment of the Working Group that this hasn’t been set up with all party involvement and he would like the Leader and Deputy Leader to consider this.

With regard to the Lutterworth High Street update, a request was made as to the amount that was bid for and whether the Council is confident of success in the New Year.

Councillors were pleased that the Classic Car Show went well, and a question was asked as to how much Harborough residents contributed to this.

In relation to the issue of ‘Investment in Harborough’ and in particular in regard to the agri-research into the use of hemp plants, Councillors were informed that hemp has been used as the bodywork and insulation within vehicles. Hemp could significantly contribute to a renewable source of material and is a very welcome input in the investment into the District.

#### Deputy Leader’s response

Further to Councillor Knowles’s comment, the extensive use of plastic to wrap bricks will be followed up.

Councillor Hallam agreed with all of the comments made by Councillors in relation to the HIC and stated that the issues will be investigated as a matter of urgency by himself and the Leader, as it is not an acceptable situation. If seen fit, all Councillors will be updated on the report and what had taken place. Councillor Hallam reiterated that he is not currently in a position to advise any further.

In relation to the various questions regarding the HIC, it was agreed that Councillor James should send his questions to Councillor Hallam and comprehensive answers will be provided after the meeting.

Councillor Hallam commented that the HIC enabled businesses to start and the associated ERDF funding relating to innovation was for start up companies for a period of three years. Currently the HIC has a 90% occupancy on a regular basis. There is a requirement to have a turnover of businesses, and the “Grow on Space” provides an avenue for businesses to move on to. HDC is hoping to work with businesses which aren’t large enough to move in to the Grow on Space to encourage development and discuss options.

The Joint Chief Executives will be meeting some of the staff at the HIC on the 16<sup>th</sup> July and a letter has been sent to all of the occupants. Councillor Hallam advised that he had a very productive meeting with the HIC Board on 15<sup>th</sup> July.

In relation to the item entitled "Developers told to abide by the rules" Councillor Hallam confirmed that he will pass on Councillor Grave's concerns to the Officers involved.

With regard to the Climate Change Working Group, the Monitoring Officer (VW) advised Councillors that the composition has been calculated based on political balance which allocates seats to political groups not single members, such as Councillor Beadle. However, given that the Working Group is an informal group there aren't any specific rules regarding its composition and the Working Group will not be making any formal recommendations to Council, although it will be putting forward comments or queries to decide on what the next steps will be. Given its informal nature there is a degree of flexibility regarding its composition and it is a matter for Council to decide who can be on the Group.

Councillor Knowles confirmed that the Liberal Democrats would not have a problem with Councillor Beadle being part of the Working Group. Councillor Hallam stated that Councillor Beadle's request will be discussed with the Leader.

Councillor Hallam will ask Officers to respond to the query regarding the Lutterworth High Street.

Regarding the query as to the contribution from Harborough residents to the car show, Joint Chief Executive (NP) confirmed that the Car Show is classed as a special expense and the money is ring-fenced to the Market Harborough Council tax payers.

Councillor Knowles thanked Councillor Hallam for his responses, but expressed his disappointment that Officers didn't provide him with a full breakdown of exactly what the legal terms are in relation to the ERDF funding.

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE PUBLIC

There were none.

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS

There were none.

#### REPORT FROM THE CABINET

A number of questions were asked on the items in the report as follows :-

Regarding the item Harborough District Commercial Services Ltd where is the external non Executive Director post being advertised ? What sort of level of number of interviewees are anticipated ? What are the costs involved for this recruitment ?

In relation to the resurfacing and associated works to various car parks in Market Harborough and Lutterworth does this include the footpath in Welland Park which has a number of flood points and pot holes, as it would make sense for this to be carried out at the same time as the Welland Park Car Park ? and does that include resurfacing all four car parks in Lutterworth ?

### Response from the Deputy Leader

Councillor Hallam asked the Joint Chief Executive (BJ) to respond to the questions relating to Harborough District Commercial Services Ltd. Harborough District Council is currently undertaking a bench-marking exercise to compare the remuneration that this particular post holds elsewhere and once that has been undertaken a recommendation will be provided. At same time, consideration is being given to the most appropriate places to advertise to get the widest possible circulation. Members will be kept informed of progress.

In regard to the questions relating to car parks, Councillor Hallam asked Mark Perris to respond.

### REPORTS ABOUT AND QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE BUSINESS OF JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

There were none.

### REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

The Scrutiny Commission report was noted as set out below:

Since my last report, the first cycle of Scrutiny meetings for 2019/20 has been completed:

- Scrutiny Commission – 6<sup>th</sup> June
- Performance Scrutiny Panel – 20<sup>th</sup> June (concluded 3<sup>rd</sup> July)
- Communities Scrutiny Panel – 27<sup>th</sup> June

Some of the main outcomes from the cycle were:

#### Scrutiny Commission:

As well as considering a report on Quarter 4 Performance, the Commission agreed the framework for the Scrutiny Workplan for the forthcoming year. In doing so, it has reduced the number of regular update reports going to the Scrutiny Panels, so that this time can be devoted to the scrutiny of important items.

The full Workplan will be made available online on the Council's Committee management system and individual reports will be included on the Combined Workplan, which is circulated to all Members each week.

The membership and meeting dates of the Scrutiny Task Group to inform and consider the impact of the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan from the perspective of the Harborough District have now been agreed.

Task Group meetings will be held on:

- Thursday July 11th
- Tuesday 10th September
- Thursday 10th October

#### Performance Panel:

Cllr Modha was elected as Chairman of the Panel.

The Panel received reports covering:

- Financial Performance Outturn 2018/19: the Panel commented on and noted the report.
- Special Expenses: the Panel asked questions and noted the report.
- Economic Development Strategy: the Panel commented on the draft revised Strategy before it went to Cabinet.
- The Council's working arrangements with SLM (Everyone Active): the Panel requested brief bi-annual updates on the arrangements.

- Corporate Property Strategy: the Panel commented on the draft strategy, especially in relation to public open space and value thresholds. The Strategy will now progress to Cabinet and Council.
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA): it was noted that the Council has not yet invoked RIPA powers. It was clarified that reports on RIPA needed to be brought to each meeting of the Panel.

#### Communities Panel:

Cllr Mrs Ackerley was elected as Chairman of the Panel.

The Panel received reports covering:

- Annual Review - Community Safety Partnership: the Panel was able to ask questions of the Council's partners.
- Anti-social Behaviour Policy Review: the Panel commented on the draft Policy.
- Built Sports Facilities Strategy: the Panel was able to comment on, and have an early input into, the developing Strategy. A later draft will be considered by the Panel in September.

#### Future Scrutiny Events

The following meetings have been scheduled:

- 19/09/2019                      Performance Scrutiny Panel
- 26/09/2019                      Communities Scrutiny Panel

#### Training

Induction training for Scrutiny Commission members is now completed and copies of the training materials and links to supporting documents have been circulated to all Members.

Councillor Graves raised his concern regarding the Built Sports Facilities Strategy report as this had been discussed by the Panel prior to HDC receiving significant information from the external contractor. He stated that he had raised a serious concern with the Joint Chief Executives as to how this had happened and he wasn't sure whether the Chair of the Panel, Councillor Mrs Ackerley was aware of this.

Councillor Mrs Ackerley commented that she had not been made aware of the concerns from Councillor Graves and will be looking into them. She highlighted that a later report with the full information will be considered by the Panel in September.

Councillor Knowles commented that a number of communication issues have arisen since the elections and he feels the issue of communications is getting worse.

Councillors Hallam and Rickman left the meeting at 7.20 pm.

#### Section 100(A) LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

RESOLVED that the public and press be excluded from the following item on the grounds that the matter yet to be discussed involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 1<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2019

### 1. EXEMPT: LAND ACQUISITION FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Council considered a report on Land Acquisition for Development.

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

RESOLVED that Council approve a budget of £1,826,000 (which includes all associated costs) for the acquisition of the land outlined in paragraph 2.5 (and edged red on the plan) of the report to Cabinet on the 1st July 2019.

### Summary of Reasons

To satisfy Corporate Delivery Plan 2019/20 Critical Outcome 3: Quality Homes for all, KA.03.01 – Achieve delivery of an appropriate mix and type of housing that meets local need throughout the District, across all tenures and Critical Outcome 10: Deliver Financial Sustainability for the future, KA 10.01 To develop business cases to deliver cost savings and income generation proposals (including capital investment options).

### URGENT ITEMS

There were none.

The Meeting ended at 7.50 p.m.