

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING

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

4<sup>th</sup> April 2022

commencing at 5.30pm

Present:

Cllr King (Chair)

Councillors: Bateman, Dann, Hallam, Knowles (for item 2) and Whelband

Officers: D. Atkinson, L. Elliott, J. Evans, S. Green, S. Hamilton and C. Mason

Remote: B. Morris

Prior to the start of the meeting, a minute's silence was held as a mark of respect with regards to the untimely passing of Leicestershire Police's former Chief Constable Simon Cole QPM.

INFORMATION EXCHANGE FROM PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Wellbeing, Communities & Housing

Councillor Whelband reported that at the recent Cabinet Sub-Committee Grants meeting, almost £750,000 was awarded in grants to a variety of good causes and projects across the District.

Planning, Environment & Waste

Councillor Bateman reported that he had recently attended a very informative Town and Country Planning Association conference, which covered the long term stewardship and care of public spaces.

Corporate & Regulatory Services

Councillor Dann confirmed that as of the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022, the contact centre has a new supplier called 'Talk Desk', with the intention to go live in October 2022.

## Strategy

Councillor King reported that since the last Cabinet meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022 he had attended the following events and meetings :-

- 10<sup>th</sup> March: On-line Local Government Association's Councillor's forum.
- 11<sup>th</sup> March: together with the Economy & Business Service Manager, attended the Harborough Business Awards and presented the Green Business of the Year Award.
- 16<sup>th</sup> March: On-line All Party Parliamentary Group for District Councils.
- 16<sup>th</sup> March: On-line Regional Employers Board for the East Midlands Council.
- 17<sup>th</sup> March: Briefing in relation to the Airfield Farm Phase 2 with the associated developers and advisors.
- 21<sup>st</sup> March: addressed 60 businesses at the Go Green conference held at the Harborough Grow-On Centre, which was the commencement of the Go Green Week promoting activities being undertaken by the District.
- 21<sup>st</sup> March: together with the interim Chief Executive, attended a mini conference of the District Council's network at the Royal Society of Arts and heard cross-party speakers on the Levelling Up agenda.
- 29<sup>th</sup> March: invited to speak at the Kibworth and Smeeton Rotary Club about HDC and its activities.

Meetings have also been attended with Leicestershire District Leaders and Chief Executives and also with Leaders and Chief Executives of neighbouring authorities, Rutland and Melton regarding better ways of working together on areas of mutual interest.

## TOPICAL ISSUES

There were none.

## APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

## MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022 be approved as a correct record.

## DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor King declared an interest in the Resettlement Schemes Update report, as he is a County Councillor and the County Council is the body being given funds by the government to provide support for Ukrainian refugees.

## PLATINUM JUBILEE COMMUNITY GRANTS

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report and highlighted that this year Her Majesty The Queen will become the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee after 70 years of service.

The new Platinum Jubilee Community Grants fund of £70,000 will help mark this historic milestone through helping to secure or develop significant capital assets, across the district, as a lasting

commemoration. This is a new fund and is addition to existing projects that will support the Platinum Jubilee. The decisions on the Platinum Jubilee Capital Grant will be made by the Cabinet Sub-Committee, and the objectives and criteria for the grant scheme will be made by the Cabinet Sub-Committee.

The Cabinet unanimously supported the proposal, commenting that it was a once in a lifetime opportunity.

RESOLVED that the objective and criteria set out in Appendix A be approved.

### Summary of Reasons

To deliver a grant scheme to support the commemoration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

### RESETTLEMENT SCHEMES UPDATE

The Leader invited Councillor Knowles to address the Cabinet, who requested that the Cabinet makes every effort to ensure that the Council puts pressure on the government to try and alleviate the 'red tape' and significant delays in relation to the Ukraine resettlement scheme, as there are a number of people within the District who are willing to take individuals and families from Ukraine.

In relation to the Afghanistan resettlement scheme, Councillor Knowles commented that disappointingly only one family had been successfully housed, despite the Council having several homes vacant in anticipation of more allocations.

The Leader stated that the second Afghan family had arrived in the District today (4<sup>th</sup> April) into one of the properties. He also highlighted that the resettlement scheme operates through the provision of a property/properties by the local authority, however the families have the right, once they arrive, to reject any locality which is offered to them, up to the point of taking occupancy. This had been the case in one instance, as the particular family wanted to live in London, rather than within the Harborough District. In a second instance, a family became unwell before they arrived in the District and therefore couldn't take up occupancy.

The Leader concurred that action needs to be taken by central government in relation to the Afghanistan resettlement scheme, given that properties within the District are available for families.

The Leader commented that in relation to Ukrainian refugees the government is currently producing more detailed guidance, and Leicestershire County Council is the body which has been given the money by government to provide the support for the refugees. No agreement has been agreed to date with the County Council in relation to the financial arrangements, but is currently in progress, however Officers are regularly updating information to resolve queries on how Ukrainian refugees can be supported via a webpage on the HDC website.

The Portfolio Holder added that in relation to the Homes for Ukraine scheme, central government will be providing £10,500 per person to Councils for the first year to enable them to provide support to families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into communities. Following the completion of property check, sponsors will be eligible for an optional 'thank you payment of £350 per month, for up to 12 months in total. As of the week commencing 28<sup>th</sup> March, no household has arrived via this particular scheme. It is expected that District Councils will be undertaking the housing inspection part of the scheme, plus undertaking DBS checks.

The Portfolio Holder advised that in relation to the Ukraine Family Scheme, Ukrainian families have arrived in the District.

In response to a question from Councillor Dann, the Interim Director of Communities and Wellbeing advised that an officer is in place over the next six months to co-ordinate the actions arising from the resettlement scheme as well as an internal project team. Information is also being collated to provide to assist sponsors and work in the community is being undertaken to assist Ukrainian people with community integration.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the ongoing work to support Ukrainian refugees be noted
- (ii) the request from Scrutiny to write a letter to central Government regarding the Afghan resettlement scheme be approved; content to be agreed by the Leader and sent by the Chief Executive on behalf of the Council.

#### Summary of Reasons

To update Cabinet on the two government schemes for Ukraine households, together with an update on other resettlement schemes that the council are delivering.

#### SECTION 100A LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

RESOLVED that the public and press be excluded from the following item on the grounds that the matters 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.

#### FINANCE AND ASSETS SYSTEM PROCUREMENT CONTRACT AWARD

The Cabinet considered an exempt report on the Finance and Assets System Procurement Contract Award.

RESOLVED that the recommendations detailed in the report be approved.

#### Summary of Reasons

To support the Council's transformation of key ICT infrastructure as determined by the Council's recently approved ICT Strategy.

#### TO CONSIDER MATTERS OF SPECIAL URGENCY

There were none.

The meeting ended at 6.09 p.m.