Present: Councillor Bernard Bateman, MBE in the Chair. Councillor Margaret Atkinson, Councillor Chris Aldred, Councillor Philip Broadbank, Councillor Nick Brown, Councillor Rebecca Burnett, Councillor Trevor Chapman, Councillor Jim Clark, Councillor Richard Cooper, Councillor Ed Darling, Councillor Sam Gibbs, Councillor Paul Haslam, Councillor Sid Hawke, Councillor Phil Ireland, Councillor Steven Jackson, Councillor Stanley Lumley, Councillor John Mann, Councillor PatMarsh, Councillor Stuart Martin, MBE, Councillor Pauline McHardy, Councillor Zoe Metcalfe, Councillor Nigel Middlemass, Councillor Ann Myatt, Councillor Tim Myatt, Councillor Victoria Oldham, Councillor Andrew Paraskos, Councillor Alex Raubitschek, Councillor Matt Scott, Councillor Nigel Simms, Councillor Graham Swift, Councillor Norman Waller, Councillor Tom Watson, Councillor Matthew Webber, Councillor Christine Willoughby and Councillor Robert Windass.

Late Arrivals: None

Early Departures: None

50 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mike Chambers, John Ennis, Michael Harrison, Sue Lumby and Samantha Mearns.

51 – URGENT BUSINESS: There was no urgent business.

52 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: Councillor Chris Aldred declared an interest in respect of Minutes 61/18 and 62/18(3) on the basis that he was a member of the Harrogate Unison Local Government branch. He remained in the meeting and voted on the items. Councillor Aldred also sought legal advice in respect of Minute 64/18 as he was employed by two agencies with contracts at Harrogate Convention Centre. On the advice of the officer he remained in the meeting.

53 – EXEMPT INFORMATION: There was no exempt information.

54 – MINUTES: The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 3 October 2018 were submitted. The Chief Executive advised that in respect of Minute 46/18 the word ‘unanimously’ should be deleted from the final vote on the Notice of Motion.

Moved by Councillor Richard Cooper Seconded by Councillor Graham Swift

and RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 3 October 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

55 – COMMUNICATIONS:
01. **Order of Business:** The Mayor advised that he had, in accordance with Standing Order 8(2)(i), agreed to vary the order of business and take Agenda Item 15 dealing with the HCC Business Strategy and Performance immediately after Mayor’s communications in order that those Independent Members of the Board present for this matter could be released early from the meeting.

02. **Remembrance Sunday:** The Mayor thanked all those who were able to support the Remembrance Sunday commemoration held in Harrogate on 11 November and also those other commemorations held across the district on Remembrance Sunday. The Mayor referred to the poppy displays in Ripon and thanked Councillor Stuart Martin and Hazel Barker for organising this. Councillor Martin thanked the Mayor for his kind words and acknowledged the contribution made by Harrogate Borough Council and North Yorkshire County Council officers.

03. **Christmas Eve Carol Concert:** The Mayor advised that he would be hosting the Christmas Eve Carol Concert which would again be held in the Royal Hall, Harrogate. Admission was by free ticket in order to ensure compliance with capacity and safety requirements for the use of the Hall and these were available for Members from his secretary. The Harrogate Theatre Box Office was issuing free tickets for members of the public.

04. **Christmas Drinks:** The Mayor invited Members and officers to join him for the traditional Christmas drink in the Fountains Room after what he hoped would be a short meeting of the Council.

56 – **PUBLIC ARRANGEMENTS - PETITIONS:** No petitions had been received.

57 – **PUBLIC ARRANGEMENTS - QUESTIONS:** No questions had been received.

58 – **ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS:**

The Mayor advised that in accordance with Standing Order 12(9) three written questions had been received which would, in accordance with the Standing Order, be dealt with as the first question under this item. He would then invite verbal questions of the Executive Members and Committee Chairs from other Members of the Council.

**Question to the Leader from Councillor Matthew Webber**

Under the Council’s ‘No blame culture’ what should happen once an instance of incorrect information being provided to a member of the public by a Council Officer is identified?

**Response:**

I would like to thank Councillor Webber for reading out the question. It is a very odd question which I think would have been better addressed to the Chief Executive as the Head of Paid Service in a more appropriate forum.
That said, I think we need some context. Who has identified that the information was incorrect – the officer themselves or a third party? Has that been verified? Is their agreement between the complainant and the officer that the information provided is incorrect? Was it a mistake or deliberate? Is the information about council services or information passed on in good faith by the council officer? Has the alleged incorrect information been clarified or corrected by the officer or someone else in good time if it was indeed incorrect?

Perhaps in his supplementary Councillor Webber might like to read out some of the context to the question he has submitted to enable me to respond properly.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Webber who asked if the Leader would be apologising to Mr Peter Lilley for an officer having provided incorrect information the Leader stated that the full situation is as detailed in quite some detail in Rachel Bowles’s email of 16 November 2018 to which I refer him. In addition the recent email from the Chief Executive pertains to this. This question seeks to humiliate a member of staff who cannot answer back in this forum. I am not prepared to see staff demeaned and belittled where they cannot respond and details have already been given to all Members. There are Council officers present at this meeting and they will, no doubt, talk to others about what you have just done. You spoke of kindness and goodwill. This was not an act of kindness or goodwill.

**Question to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Communities from Councillor Chris Aldred**

In relation to the supposed "Upgrade" carried out to our Council Tenants Communal TV Aerials last year, I would be grateful if he could supply me with the following specific information:

1. When was the supposed "Upgrade" carried out? What exactly was the "upgrade" supposed to achieve? Which company did the work and how much were they paid?

2. How many Council Tenants receive their Television Service through these Communal Aerials and where are they located? How many complaints have been received about Reception following the "upgrade"?

3. The Cabinet Member told me on October 3rd that "advice was being sought from Sky and other Industry experts to determine the best course of action". Are Council Officers now in procession of this advice and if so, could he now supply the "plan with timescales", that was promised to Members & affected tenants?

4. Could he provide a summary of the total Costs the Council has incurred on this issue, including Officer time?

**Response:**

The upgrade took place in December 2017 and January 2018. The aim was to allow tenants to obtain a greater range of services. The work was undertaken by a company called Crystal Electronics and the price for the Fairfax Avenue properties was £3320.
The flats included in the scheme are 79 to 165. The number receiving their reception through this service is not known as some tenants may choose not to watch TV or obtain their feed through other services. We have received 3 complaints however; the number phoning Customer Services about this issue may be higher.

We have now received the independent technical report. As a result we are pursuing the contractor for either full rectification of the issues being suffered by our tenants at their cost, or financial recompense for the problems. This may result in legal action; consequently timescales will vary depending on the response of the company involved.

This information is not known as officer time is not recorded by complaint.

**Question to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources, Enterprise & Economic Development from Councillor Trevor Chapman**

A recent report from the local office of Citizens Advice highlighted the huge impact that the introduction of Universal Credit has had on their organisation. Would the cabinet member brief members on the impact that the introduction of Universal Credit has had on council staff workload and also indicate the current level of housing rent debt?

**Response:**

**Housing tenancy information**

The impact of the early roll out of UC was not as severe for Harrogate Borough Council as for those Authorities who had not prepared for full digital roll out of UC. Nevertheless the introduction of UC in the Harrogate district area in June 2016 has had an impact on the level of rent arrears. In addition, the work on individual UC cases is significantly more resource intensive and reduces the amount of time available for Officers to provide support and debt advice across their patch.

From the implementation of the full digital roll out of UC in June 2016 (Q1), current tenant rent arrears increased from £129,000 to £208,795 by the end of Q2 this year. The number of tenants in arrears also increased from 736 to 887.

In the same period the total arrears of current and former tenants increased from just under £229,000 to more than £319,000. Former tenant arrears have risen due to the increased number of tenants being evicted for rent arrears.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. evicted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017/18</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018/19 (at Q2 end)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the end of Q2 2018 74% of UC claimants were in rent arrears with an average arrear of £355. The total arrears for UC cases amounted to £162,190 out of a total arrear of £208,795.
21 UC cases had arrears in excess of £1000 at Q2 end 2018/19. In Q1 2016/17 this figure was only four.

**Housing Benefit Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Housing Benefit claims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>6,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>6,081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017/18</td>
<td>5,109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018/19 (at Q2 end)</td>
<td>4,518</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the start of the Universal Credit roll out in the Harrogate district in June 2016, the above figures show the impact on the Housing Benefit caseload. To date we have seen a 33% reduction in caseload over the period. Universal Credit is currently applicable to new benefit claims for working age households, and excludes a number of specific categories (families with three or more children, specific accommodation types) who remain on Housing Benefit.

Although the workload in terms of case numbers has decreased, the remaining caseload has become more complex as a result. The assessment and management of housing benefit is a complex area. New assessors must complete a detailed training programme over six months prior to career graded progression over a further two to three years. A new service structure was put in place from May 2018 following a review. This allows for more flexibility across the team to enable continued support to our Housing Benefit customers during the roll out period. Until we have a final roll out plan for universal credit we need to carefully manage resources in this area to ensure continued support to the more vulnerable members of our district.

Cabinet Members then responded verbally to questions from Members of the Council. In response to a question from Councillor Tom Watson asking how many of the eleven parish meetings within the district set a parish precept, the Cabinet Member for Resources, Enterprise and Economic Development agreed to provide a written response.

**59 – MEMORANDA OF THE REPORT FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION:** There were no such reports.

**60 – FINANCIAL UPDATE:** The Head of Finance presented a financial update, which focussed on the headlines of the Autumn Budget from 29 October and the impact on local government funding.

**Overall Picture**
- End to Austerity?
- Prospects for public spending are starting to look more positive.
- Overall public-sector spending forecasts for the 2019 Spending Review are better than had previously been expected.
Local Government Funding
- New short-term funding.
- Local government was given a prominent role in the Budget.
- Business Rates changes, including:
  o Retail relief
  o Public Lavatories’ Relief
  o Self-catering and Holiday Let consultation
  o Local High Street funding
- Longer term decisions on overall local government funding will be made in the 2019 Spending Review.
- Our finance settlement details were expected tomorrow but have been delayed until after the Brexit vote on 11 December 2018.
  o Announcement on 75% business rate pilots (submitted bid with NY and WY partners)
  o Risk in how New Homes Bonus is allocated.
  o Risk of Negative RSG

Our Own Budget
Key dates in the 2019/20 budget setting process:
- 2 January 2019: Cabinet consider the draft budget
- 14 January 2019: Overview & Scrutiny Commission
- 6 February 2019: Cabinet propose final budget to Council
- 13 February 2019: Budget Council
- 6 March 2019: Council: Council Tax resolution vote

HBC Financial Position
- GF projected overspend at Q2 £373k.

And Finally….
- Annual Audit letter was published by Mazars in September.

61 – REPORT BACK ON PREVIOUS NOTICES OF MOTION: The Mayor advised that, in accordance with Standing Order 10(6)(a), there was one report to be considered at the meeting. The response of the Human Resources Committee in respect of the Notice of Motion referred to it from the October meeting of the Council would be dealt with under Human Resources Committee minute 34/18 and would be addressed by Council under Minute 62/18(03) below.

62 – MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND CABINET: The Council resolved upon the various non-delegated Minutes of the Committees and Cabinet as follows:

62/18(01) – CABINET – 17 OCTOBER 2018:

53/18 - COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY: DRAFT CHARGING SCHEDULE:

The Mayor advised that the Cabinet Minutes of 17 October 2018 would be taken together with Cabinet Minute 62/18 of 14 November 2018.
Moved by Councillor Richard Cooper Seconded by Councillor Graham Swift

and RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17 October 2018 together with Cabinet Minute 62/18 of 14 November 2018 be approved and adopted.

62/18(02) – CABINET – 14 NOVEMBER 2018:

Moved by Councillor Richard Cooper Seconded by Councillor Graham Swift

and RESOLVED:

That the remainder of the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 14 November 2018 be approved and adopted.

62/18(03) – HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 24 OCTOBER 2018:

Moved by Councillor Tim Myatt Seconded by Councillor Graham Swift

34/18 – NOTICE OF MOTION – THE HARROGATE SUPPLEMENT:

The Mayor invited the Chair of the Human Resources Committee, Councillor Tim Myatt, to speak to the response of the Committee on the Notice of Motion. Councillor Chris Aldred, the mover of the original motion, then responded.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 24 October 2018, together with the response to the Notice of Motion under Minute 34/18 were then approved and adopted.

62/18(04) – LICENSING COMMITTEE – 8 NOVEMBER 2018:

Moved by Councillor Stuart Martin Seconded by Councillor Nigel Simms

and RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 8 November 2018 be approved and adopted.

62/18(05) – GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – 13 SEPTEMBER 2018:

Moved by Councillor Steven Jackson Seconded by Councillor Alex Raubitschek

and RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 15 November 2018 be approved and adopted.

63 – NOTICES OF MOTION RECEIVED: The Mayor advised that there were two
Notices of Motion before the Council. The first in the names of Councillors Richard Cooper and Graham Swift would be debated by the Council, in accordance with Standing Order 10(6)(d) as the Mayor considered it expedient as the deadline for consultation was 19 December 2018. The remaining motion in the names of Councillors Pat Marsh and Chris Aldred would, once moved and seconded, stand referred for consideration by the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport.

(1) “This Council opposes the plans to move the post office on Cambridge Road in to WHSmith on Cambridge Street and downgrade it from a Crown Post Office to a franchise.

The Council will write to the Chief Executive of Post Office Ltd and to the Chief Executive of WHSmith making clear its opposition to the proposal. Further, the Council will use its best endeavours to encourage partners to oppose the plans through the Post Office’s formal consultation procedure.”

Moved by Councillor Richard Cooper Seconded by Councillor Graham Swift

In accordance with Standing Order 10(6)(d) this motion was debated by the Council.

Upon a vote being taken on the Notice of Motion, Mayor declared the motion carried.

(2) “That this Council urgently calls a meeting with NYCC to discuss the loss and development of vital bus services within Harrogate District”.

Moved by Councillor Pat Marsh Seconded by Councillor Chris Aldred

In accordance with Standing Order 10(6)(a) the motion stood referred to the Human Resources Committee Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport*.

64 – HARROGATE CONVENTION CENTRE - BUSINESS STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE: The Chair of the Harrogate Convention Centre Board, Councillor Richard Cooper, submitted the annual report in connection with the Centre’s business strategy and performance, as required by the Council and HCC’s Constitutional arrangements.

The Mayor welcomed John Bywater, Sharon Canavar, Andrew Manby and James Thomlinson, Independent Members of the HCC Board, who were present for the purposes of the item.

The Leader reported on performance for the last year, with between £55m and £60m brought into the district.

Moved by Councillor Richard Cooper Seconded by Councillor Graham Swift and RESOLVED:

That the report be approved.
65 – **COMMON SEAL:**
Moved by Councillor Richard Cooper    Seconded by Councillor Graham Swift

and **RESOLVED:**

That (1) the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to the Deeds and Documents necessary to carry out the resolutions confirmed and passed this day; and

(2) no deed shall be treated as being conditional upon Council proceeding until completion of a transaction relevant to any deeds.