

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

19 DECEMBER 2019 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr MR Lay - Chairman
Mr P Williams – Vice-Chairman

Mr JMT Collett, Mr DS Cope, Mrs MJ Crooks, Mrs LJ Mullaney (for Ms A Pendlebury),
Mr MC Sheppard-Bools, Mr R Webber-Jones and Mr HG Williams

Officers in attendance: Matthew Bowers, Storme Coop, Bill Cullen, Julie Kenny, Lisa Kirby, Rebecca Owen and Caroline Roffey

222 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ladkin and Pendlebury, with the substitution of Councillor L Mullaney for Councillor Pendlebury authorised in accordance with council procedure rule 10.

223 MINUTES

It was moved by Councillor P Williams, seconded by Councillor H Williams and

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 3 October be confirmed and signed by the chairman.

224 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

225 VARIATIONS TO SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS

The Scrutiny Commission received a presentation about the S106 process. It was noted that, whilst the decision on applications to vary S106 agreements was delegated to the Head of Planning following consultation with the chairman of the Planning Committee, relevant ward councillor(s) and the Legal Services Manager, the Head of Planning had referred all applications which sought to reduce contributions over the last two years (of which there had been five) to the Planning Committee, thereby making the information available to all councillors. Members continued to query whether consultation had taken place on specific cases and were assured that this would be looked into.

Discussion ensued on the process for GP surgeries to request developer contributions and how to find out where the contributions have been spent. It was noted that this information was regularly sent to councillors and parish councils.

With regard to planning S106 allocations, it was noted that the updated local plan would list infrastructure requirements and would also look at the community infrastructure levy (CIL).

Concern was expressed about a report considered by Leicestershire County Council's Cabinet earlier the same week which stated they were unable to sign the S106 agreement for the Barwell Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE), citing it as being out of date. It was pointed out that LCC had been engaged as recently as November and that the agreement was at its final stages of sign off. Ward members were concerned that

they had not been aware of the issue, and officers explained that they had only become aware on seeing the report on publication.

It was suggested that agencies including the police, county council and CCG be invited to inform the Scrutiny Commission of their methodology for calculating and use of S106 monies.

It was requested that the presentation provided be sent to all members and that a briefing note be provided on changes to contributions on small developments.

226 PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER

Consideration was given to a report which sought endorsement for a new Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for Hinckley & Bosworth which would ban the use of intoxicating substances or psychoactive substances on public land across the borough, impose dog control on public land and ban fires and barbecues, remote controlled vehicles, aircraft and motorcycles on some sites. It was noted that parish councils had been invited to add controls under the borough's PSPO and nine agreed to do so.

It was noted that officers could issue fixed penalty notices and that the police and the Anti Social Behaviour team would deal with drug issues. Whilst it was noted that parish councils could be authorised to enforce PSPOs, members felt it was more difficult for them as they lived within that same community.

It was noted that each site had to be publicised and would need signage.

Officers were thanked for their hard work.

RESOLVED – the proposed order be endorsed and RECOMMENDED to Council.

227 LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICTS COUNCIL TAX PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Members were updated and provided with an overview of council tax collection performance for 2018/19 for all Leicestershire districts following challenges raised by Leicestershire County Council which suggested that council tax recovery rates in Leicestershire were lower than other county areas.

It was explained that the county council in compiling its data had taken only a snapshot of the recovery figures at the end of the financial year and had not taken into account money collected after the end of the financial year. It was noted that the recovery rate was 99.21% after allowing for payments received after the year end, which exceeded the target of 98.85%, demonstrating that the county council's challenge had been unfounded.

Members were assured that whilst debt was chased, advice was followed on dealing with debtors appropriately and each case was considered on its own merits. New initiatives including text alerts and contacting debtors outside of office hours were being investigated to further improve collection.

The impact of universal credit was queried, and it was noted that this had less of an impact on council tax collection than on rent collection as council tax was considered to be a priority debt, but as a consequence there had been an increase in applications for discretionary housing payments.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to the county council to respond to their comments.

228 SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2019-20/21

The Scrutiny Commission received the 2019/20 work programme. It was noted that the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel would be brought to the budget meeting before a decision being made by Council.

A member requested an update on the financial position of Block C of the Crescent. It was agreed that this would be added to the work programme for March or April.

229 MINUTES OF FINANCE & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 October were noted.

(The Meeting closed at 7.45 pm)

CHAIRMAN