

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

10 JULY 2018 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr MR Lay - Chairman
Mrs R Camamile and Mr KWP Lynch – Vice-Chairman

Mr DC Bill MBE, Mr SL Bray, Mr WJ Crooks, Mr RB Roberts, Mr BE Sutton, Mr R Ward and Mr HG Williams

Also in attendance: Councillor MA Cook

Officers in attendance: Gemma Dennis, Rebecca Owen, Julie Stay and Ashley Wilson

82 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor MacDonald.

83 MINUTES

It was moved by Councillor Camamile, seconded by Councillor Sutton and

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2018 be confirmed and signed by the chairman.

84 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

Councillor Ward entered the meeting at 6.32pm.

85 PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE

Members were updated on progress of current planning appeals. The chairman reminded members that these updates had originally been requested due to the number of appeals being lost following member decisions against officer recommendations and asked whether this was still the cause of lost appeals. In response, it was noted that the majority of cases in the report were linked to officer decisions but that this may be representative of the increase in delegated decisions being made. A member suggested that the introduction of the option for a “minded to refuse” decision to allow for consideration of reasons for refusal had also led to improved decision making, although some members were not comfortable with the “minded to refuse” process.

A member drew attention to the financial implications and queried whether the budget would be sufficient to cover any further appeals. In response it was explained that a recent appeal had taken more days than anticipated which had resulted in higher costs, but that there was unlikely to be a similar occurrence throughout the rest of the year. Furthermore, the Council was awaiting confirmation of costs which it expected to be recovering from a recent appeal.

Reference was made to recent discussions on the need to include more information in the Planning Committee minutes on members’ reasons for refusal. Members welcomed the introduction of a crib sheet to assist them and requested regular inclusion of policy references in the agenda and more frequent training on planning policy. It was requested

that the part of the constitution relating to provision for a member to call an application into Planning Committee be recirculated for members and that some guidance be produced to assist members who have an issue with an application, for example by way of a flow chart.

RESOLVED –

- (i) The report be noted;
- (ii) The following be provided for members:
 - A crib sheet to assist with reasons for refusal
 - Planning policy guidance be included in agendas regularly
 - An extract from the constitution in relation to calling a planning application to the committee
 - A flowchart to assist where a member has an issue with an application
 - Further planning policy training.

86 CORPORATE APPROACH TO RECRUITING AND DEVELOPING TRAINEE STAFF

The Scrutiny Commission received a report on opportunities and options to recruit and develop the council's trainee workforce. Whilst generally in support, a member suggested that the use of the word 'internship' may have negative connotations and asked that consideration be given to amending the use of the word to reflect that it related to work place experience. Officers emphasised that the intention was to provide a mix of options, including professional apprenticeships and traineeships.

RESOLVED – the report be supported, subject to consideration of amended wording.

87 REVALUATION DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF SCHEME - UPDATE

Members were informed of the changes to the additional funding made available for discretionary rates relief and the wide take up from businesses, facilitated by officers. In response to questions from members, the Head of Finance agreed to provide exact numbers of rate relief granted and detail of the small business relief.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

88 ANNUAL REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION

Consideration was given to the annual update of the constitution following the full review the previous year. During discussion, the following points were raised:

- Concern was expressed about removing the requirement to consult the chairman of the Planning Committee in relation to variations to S106 agreements and unilateral undertakings
- It was acknowledged that financial limits may need increasing, but members generally felt that the proposed limits were too high
- It was suggested that £100k was too high to be considered for minor disposals
- It was requested that appendix 1 contain more detail to be read without a copy of the constitution
- In relation to the terms of reference of the Asset Strategy & Regeneration Group, it was requested that the relevant ward member(s) be consulted on proposals for Middlefield Lane and Trinity Lane.

It was agreed that the amendments to the financial procedure rules would be discussed with group leaders before going to Council.

RESOLVED – the matters raised be noted and discussed with group leaders.

89 SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2018-19

Consideration was given to the work programme for the remainder of the municipal year. It was suggested that the Scrutiny Commission should consider an alternative to Leicestershire County Council's proposals to create a unitary authority. It was agreed that some suggestions for taking the matter forward would be discussed at the following meeting.

A member reminded the Commission that, at the previous meeting, he had requested a report on highway adoption.

A report was requested for Finance & Performance Scrutiny on the building control service and its charges.

90 MINUTES OF FINANCE & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY

The minutes of Finance & Performance Scrutiny on 21 May were received for information.

(The Meeting closed at 7.48 pm)

CHAIRMAN