

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

21 NOVEMBER 2013 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr MR Lay - Chairman
Mr C Ladkin and Miss DM Taylor – Vice-Chairman

Mr PR Batty, Mr Bessant, Mr PAS Hall, Mrs WA Hall, Mr MS Hulbert, Mr DW Inman, Mr JS Moore, Mr K Morrell and Mr K Nichols

Officers in attendance: Steve Atkinson, Bill Cullen, Louisa Horton, Rebecca Owen, Katherine Plummer, Caroline Roffey and Sharon Stacey

279 MINUTES

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

280 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

281 PARKING ENFORCEMENT

In response to a request at a previous meeting, members received a report on parking enforcement. It was explained that whilst the County Council decided the time allocation of wardens to each area, this was based on where problems existed. A representative of the County Council who was present at the meeting for other items, stated that the majority of parking restrictions were respected but if there were specific problems they should be reported to his team. Members were asked to do so via the Democratic Services Officer in order to facilitate co-ordination.

Following queries about the structure and costs of the current arrangements, it was reported that there had been a cost reduction since the re-structure partly due to lower central recharges.

282 IDENTIFICATION OF PRIORITY RESERVES

It was reported that, in response to the request at the previous meeting, six priority reserves had been identified which were recommended for delegation to officers to transfer funds into these reserves. During discussion, the following points were raised:

- Concern regarding the seemingly low figure recommended for the appeals reserve;
- Concern regarding the figure earmarked for the Leisure Centre reserve;
- Whether waste management costs could be built into Section 106 agreement costs;
- Concern about further delegation of key issues to officers;
- Requirement for more information on figures in reserves, including the enforcement reserve.

It was reported that the Leisure Centre reserve would be used to cover time lag. As explained at the previous meeting, it was emphasised that delegating the transfer of funds to some reserves would ensure timely transfer rather than having to wait for a

Council meeting to make a decision. It was also stated that transfers made would be reported back to Council so members were aware of decisions made under delegated powers.

It was agreed that indicative financial figures would be put to each priority reserve on the list and reported to Council at the meeting on 3 December, as they would not be available before the agenda was circulated, and they would be included in the budget report to the Commission in January.

Councillor Mrs Hall left the meeting at 7.30pm.

283 LTP3

Ian Drummond, Assistant Director, Leicestershire County Council, attended to give a presentation on the LTP3. He explained that it was a transport strategy for local resilience and growth. He reported that following the positive work in Coalville and Loughborough, the County Council were now focussing on the urban area surrounding Hinckley which would include looking at the traffic restrictions on Regent Street, smart ticketing, real time information for bus services, investment in highway maintenance, co-ordination of roadworks and implementing new cycle ways and pedestrian routes.

It was reported that there was around £4-5m available for the project and that background information from 2011 onwards was available on the county council's website.

Mr Drummond agreed to circulate his presentation to Members via the democratic Services Officer.

The Scrutiny Commission asked that Mr Drummond attends again to update, and he agreed to do so in the summer of 2014.

Councillor Taylor left at 8.30pm.

284 RURAL BUS SERVICES

Ian Drummond gave a presentation on rural bus services and progress of a review underway, following concerns expressed by Members regarding the potential withdrawal of the high level of subsidy provided by the county council to support the number 7 bus service. Specifically it was noted that this particular service covered 44 miles and the net subsidy provided was £177,810 per annum. There was an average of 13 passengers per journey.

The Scrutiny Commission agreed to follow up on progress as the consultation progressed.

285 SUPPORT AND PROVISION FOR THE LGBT COMMUNITY WITHIN HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH

The Scrutiny Commission was informed of the work being undertaken within the Borough in relation to supporting its lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. Representatives of Next Generation were in attendance to talk about their work on the Proud Generation project and the challenges that were faced in the borough, particularly in comparison with larger cities. It was noted that Proud Generation was the first borough-wide LGBT advocacy and advice service in the area and provided valuable support.

Members generally felt that they hadn't previously been sufficiently aware of the subject and of the Proud Generation project and suggested cascading the information to all councillors in order to raise awareness in a cost effective way. Members were very supportive of the project and endorsed the hard work undertaken, mostly on a voluntary basis and

RECOMMENDED – all Councillors receive training and knowledge transfer in the area of support and provision for the LGBT Community.

286 HOUSING APPLICATIONS POLICY - MEDICAL ASSESSMENT

A report was presented in response to a request at the previous meeting when concern had been raised about the processes used in medical assessments undertaken for housing applicants who may have medical needs. It was reported that there were very few appeals against the medical category in which applicants were placed, but any appeals were referred to Now Medical.

Members expressed concern that the medical assessments provided were done over the telephone. Officers stated that where applicants believed they had an urgent need to move on medical grounds, applications were usually supported by medical letters. Officers advised that in determining medical need for rehousing, the suitability of the applicants' current accommodation in relation to their medical condition was assessed.

At this juncture, having reached 9.25pm, it was moved by Councillor Lay, seconded by Councillor Nichols and

RESOLVED – the meeting be allowed to continue until all business on the agenda had been transacted.

Returning to the agenda item, members asked how many housing applicants claimed medical circumstances. In response it was reported that there were currently 88 of 2200 on the waiting list in the medium category on medical grounds and none with a priority medical need as these were dealt with very quickly upon receipt.

Members agreed that further information on the robustness of the process be circulated to the Scrutiny Commission in advance of the next meeting.

287 SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2013-2015

It was noted that the planning appeals and developer contributions reports would be brought to the February meeting and that updates on the bus station development would be brought periodically. A report on the Hub, specifically the financial aspects, was requested.

(The Meeting closed at 9.35 pm)

CHAIRMAN