

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

12 MARCH 2015 AT 6.30 PM

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

Mr MS Hulbert, Mr DW Inman, Mr R Mayne, Mr JS Moore, Mr K Morrell and
Mr K Nichols

Also in attendance:

Officers in attendance: Steve Atkinson, Bill Cullen, Julie Kenny, Paul Langham, Rebecca Owen and Sharon Stacey

418 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Batty, Bessant and Hall.

419 MINUTES

It was moved by Councillor Nichols, seconded by Councillor Mayne and

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

420 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

421 CHANNEL SHIFT STRATEGY

Following a request at the previous meeting, the Scrutiny Commission received a report on the Channel Shift project. It was noted that not every function would be able to be completed online, but that a significant number would be. This would free up front line staff to assist more people who were unable to complete their tasks online.

Some concern was expressed regarding security of information when carrying out online transactions, but in response it was noted that the system used was based on the highest levels of security and identity checking, as required by central government.

It was agreed that a progress report be brought to the Scrutiny Commission in twelve months.

422 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Scrutiny Commission considered the abbreviated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which focussed on the forecast position and reminded members of the reduction in government funding and the benefits of the new homes bonus over the last few years. In discussing current projects, the Chief Executive confirmed that, contrary to recent comments on social media, Sainsbury's had reiterated its commitment to the Crescent development, by commissioning a 'fit out' from June 2015.

Members requested that an additional page be included in the MTFS which showed underspends over the previous few years, to indicate how surpluses had decreased year on year. It was agreed that this would be provided as an additional paper for Council.

RESOLVED – the Medium Term Financial Strategy be RECOMMENDED to Council, with the additional information requested.

423 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

Further to the request at the previous meeting, a report on the setting up of Hinckley and Bosworth Development, a company wholly owned by the Council, was presented to members. It was noted that the council's representation on the board was one of the matters still under discussion. The distinction between the properties purchased from the housing revenue account and those developed by the proposed company was clarified and it was noted that these would meet different housing needs.

Concern was expressed regarding the ethical grounds for creating the company and that it should not be set up solely for financial reasons. In response officers reported that the financial aspect was a key driver, but agreed it was important for clarity to be given around the ethical status of the company and therefore to revise the documentation to include an ethical statement.

RESOLVED –

- (a) An ethical statement be drafted and RECOMMENDED to Council;
- (b) Regular updates be provided to the Scrutiny Commission;
- (c) The recommendations be endorsed and RECOMMENDED to Council.

424 JOINT SCRUTINY OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The Scrutiny Commission gave consideration to draft terms of reference for a joint overview & scrutiny body with Blaby District Council in order to scrutinise the Community Safety Partnership. It was noted that there had been an informal merger of the partnership in the two authority areas since 2011 and that work was commencing towards a formal merger. Joint scrutiny was an essential part of this process. It was reported that there would be an annual joint meeting of both Scrutiny Commissions with the host authority and chair alternating. It was further noted that a full report for approval of the merger and setting up of the joint committee would be considered by council during the following municipal year.

RESOLVED – the terms of reference be endorsed and RECOMMENDED for approval by Council.

(The Meeting closed at 8.00 pm)

CHAIRMAN