

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

10 DECEMBER 2015 AT 6.30 PM

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

Mr RG Allen, Mr DC Bill MBE, Mr DS Cope (for Mr SL Bray), Mr WJ Crooks,
Mr KWP Lynch, Mr SL Rooney, Mr BE Sutton and Mr R Ward

Also in attendance: Councillor M Hall and Councillor K Morrell

Officers in attendance: Bill Cullen, Malcolm Evans, Simon D Jones, Julie Kenny, Karen Mason, Rebecca Owen and Sharon Stacey

290 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bray and Williams, with the substitution of Councillor DS Cope for Councillor Bray authorised in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.

291 MINUTES

On the motion of Councillor Camamile, seconded by Councillor Rooney, it was

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

292 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

293 BLUEPRINT 2020 - LEICESTERSHIRE POLICE CONSULTATION

Chief Inspector Lucy Batchelor attended the meeting to present the Blueprint 2020 project to members. During the presentation and in response to questions, the following points were raised:

- The 'workforce mix' was about protecting frontline policing, using people more efficiently and making best use of technology
- The potential to increase 'self-service' online, which would be subject to a consultation in the New Year
- The need to tackle cyber-crime as a major growth area
- Further consultation and engagement with community groups would take place throughout 2016.

Councillor Ward arrived at 6.33pm.

During discussion on the presentation, members raised the following points:

- Whilst the importance of counter-terrorism was acknowledged, it was suggested that, to the majority of residents, it was issues on their doorstep such as antisocial behaviour that were most important
- The gradual withdrawal of community policing over the past 30 years

- The lack of communication between the Police and councillors. The Deputy Chief Executive reminded members that there were open sessions for councillors following the Endeavour meetings and these would continue
- A few parish councils had been informed that, as a representative of the police had been unable to attend their meetings, they could get the latest crime figures online, however on looking online, the information had been a couple of months out of date. The representative agreed to follow this up.

The Chairman requested that councillors be involved in consultation events where possible.

294 LEISURE CENTRE UPDATE

Members received a presentation showing progress made on developing the new leisure centre on Argents Mead and highlighting that the project was two-thirds complete and on programme for opening in May 2016. A member expressed concern that, whilst it had been hoped that building the leisure centre on Argents Mead would increase footfall at the top part of Castle Street, the Co-op was now closing without having benefitted from this potential increase. Members were informed that officers had made every attempt to arrange to meet with the Co-op management to discuss their decision to move out of their large Castle Street store, but this had not been achieved. It was, however, stated that there had been interest in the unit from other large national companies.

The good progress on the leisure centre and the other successful capital projects during 2015 was noted and officers were thanked for their work. It was agreed that a visit be arranged for members to the new Leisure Centre in the New Year.

295 LOCAL HOUSING COMPANY - UPDATE

The Scrutiny Commission received a copy of the authority's business case for the Wholly Owned Company (WOC). It was noted that this was separate to the business case for the company itself, and any separate appraisals for key sites to be considered for development by the company.

It was requested that the full Ethical Statement proposed at the meeting of the Commission in March and subsequently agreed by Council be included in the business case.

Some members expressed concern that there was insufficient capacity within the authority's establishment to take on the initial management of the company. In response, attention was drawn to section 4.1 in the report, and members were reassured that there were the skills and capacity to undertake the work in-house using a currently vacant position in Estates and Asset Management, but that eventually the company may need to establish its own management team.

In relation to the financial aspects, attention was drawn to the timeline in the report which showed the projected return on investment. It was noted that the company would borrow from the authority to fund the business until the return was realised, and this would be set out in each business case for the particular development.

It was requested that the wording used on page 14 be amended to remove reference to migrant workers and ensure language used was appropriate.

It was agreed that the Scrutiny Commission would receive a progress update during the first quarter of 2016/17.

296 HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

Members were advised of national housing policy developments including reduction in social housing rent, 'Pay to Stay' policy, Right to Buy for registered social housing tenants, sale of high value voids and review of lifetime tenancies and the implications for the authority of these policy changes. During presentation and discussion, the following points were made:

- The Housing Investment Strategy would be brought to January's Scrutiny Commission
- It had been suggested that tenants earning more than £30,000 would have to pay market rents as part of the 'Pay to Stay' policy, which would mean it would be cheaper to purchase a property
- Details of the policy regarding sale of high value voids were being awaited and required each authority to submit details of housing stock values to enable the Government to make that decision
- It was likely that such high value voids would be in the rural areas, where the authority had a need for housing
- The suggested rent reduction policy would undermine the decision made (prompted by the Government) in 2013 to increase rents, which this authority had done to a lower level than recommended by the Government
- The removal of 'lifetime tenancies' had devastated the farming industry and would cause serious detriment to council tenants and also lead to tenants not wishing to invest in and improve their properties
- Reports would be taken to Executive or Council should any amendments to policy be required when the detail of the Bill were known.

It was requested that the MP be invited to attend a meeting to listen to a discussion on this matter to understand how the policies would impact this authority and the residents of the borough. The Leader agreed to arrange this. It was agreed that a working group be set up to meeting with the MP to consist of three Conservative councillors, two Liberal Democrat and one Labour.

297 MEMBERSHIP OF LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY - PROGRESS REPORT

An update report in relation to the Leicester and Leicestershire Combined Authority was received and Members were reminded of the three core functions proposed for the Combined Authority. Members were also informed that it had been agreed that Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council would be an associate member of the Coventry & Warwickshire LEP.

It was noted that Harborough District and Melton Borough Councils had yet to meet to confirm membership of the Leicester and Leicestershire Combined Authority, but all other authorities in Leicestershire had confirmed their commitment.

298 CONSULTATION UPDATE

The Scrutiny Commission was updated on the current consultation regarding a possible council tax referendum and charging for the garden waste service that was due to close the following day. It was reported that there had been over 2000 responses so far – 40% submitted online, 35% in response to the Borough Bulletin and 25% as a result of the direct mail out. Of the total responses, 73% had indicated that they would vote 'yes' in a referendum for a council tax increase, and only 39% had indicated that they supported a charge for the garden waste service.

Officers explained that, once the consultation had closed, they would analyse the results by ward to ensure consistency and then circulate to members.

299 ELECTORAL REVIEW OF LEICESTERSHIRE - BOUNDARY COMMISSION DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

The draft recommendations of the Electoral Review of Leicestershire were noted.

300 SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2015-2016

The work programme was noted.

301 MATTERS FROM WHICH THE PUBLIC MAY BE EXCLUDED

On the motion of Councillor Camamile seconded by Councillor Ward, it was

RESOLVED – in accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 10 of Part I of Schedule 12A of that Act.

302 REQUEST CAPITAL BUDGET FOR INCENTIVES TO ATTRACT APPROPRIATE TENANTS TO BLOCK C, THE CRESCENT

A report was presented which outlined funding required for incentives to attract suitable tenants to Block C of the Crescent. It was noted that £160,000 in incentives would be triggered before the next meeting of Council and therefore retrospective approval would be given, subject to the Scrutiny Commission and the Executive being supportive.

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

RESOLVED – the report be endorsed and action requested be supported.

(The Meeting closed at 8.55 pm)

CHAIRMAN