

Date: 4 February 2009

To: Members of the Scrutiny Commission

Mr MR Lay (Chairman)
Mrs R Camamile (Vice-Chairman)
Mr PAS Hall (Vice-Chairman)
Mr PR Batty
Mr PS Bessant
Mr DM Gould
Mrs A Hall
Mr DW Inman

Mr CG Joyce
Mr C Ladkin
Dr JR Moore
Mr K Morrell
Mr K Nichols
Mrs S Sprason
Mrs BM Witherford

Copy to all other Members of the Council

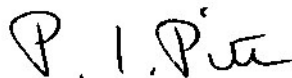
(other recipients for information)

Dear Councillor

There will be a meeting of the **SCRUTINY COMMISSION** in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Hinckley on **THURSDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2009** at **6.30pm** and your attendance is required.

The agenda for the meeting is set out overleaf.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. I. Pitt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a small "I" and "Pitt" following.

Pat Pitt
Corporate Governance Officer

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 12 FEBRUARY 2009

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

RESOLVED 2. MINUTES

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2009 attached marked 'SC64'.

3. ADDITIONAL URGENT BUSINESS BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

To be advised of any additional items of business which the Chairman decides by reason of special circumstances shall be taken as matters of urgency at this meeting.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive verbally from members any disclosures which they are required to make in accordance with the Council's code of conduct or in pursuance of Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. **This is in addition to the need for such disclosure to be also given when the relevant matter is reached on the agenda.**

5. QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

To hear any questions and to receive any petitions in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 10 and 11.

6. HOUSING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUDGETS

Report of the Director of Community and Planning Services attached marked 'SC65' (pages 1 - 26). Appendix 2 to this report will follow.

A maximum of 45 minutes has been allocated for this item.

RESOLVED 7. PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT APPEAL DECISIONS

Report of the Director of Community and Planning Services attached marked 'SC66' (pages 27 - 30).

A maximum of 10 minutes has been allocated for this item.

- RESOLVED 8. ANTI POVERTY STRATEGY – CI RESEARCH – FINAL REPORT
- Report of the Head of Corporate and Scrutiny Services attached marked 'SC67' (pages 31 - 62).
- A maximum of 20 minutes has been allocated for this item.*
- RESOLVED 9. ANTI POVERTY STRATEGY
- Report of the Head of Corporate and Scrutiny Services attached marked 'SC68' (pages 63 - 80).
- A maximum of 20 minutes has been allocated for this item.*
- RESOLVED 10. COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES REVIEW
- Report of the Head of Corporate and Scrutiny Services attached marked 'SC69' (pages 81 - 91).
- A maximum of 10 minutes has been allocated for this item.*
- RESOLVED 11. COMMUNITY SAFETY
- Report of the Deputy Chief Executive attached marked 'SC70' (pages 92 - 95).
- A maximum of 10 minutes has been allocated for this item.*
- RESOLVED 12. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10
- To arrange a workshop to feed into the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2009/10.
- RESOLVED 13. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09
- Work Programme 2008/09 attached marked 'SC71' (pages 96 – 107).
14. FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL DECISIONS
- Copy attached marked 'SC72' (pages 108 - 113).
15. MINUTES OF SELECT COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS
- For noting only:
- (i) Finance & Audit Services Select Committee, 22 December 2008. Attached marked 'SC73' (pages 114 - 115);
 - (ii) Barwell & Earl Shilton Scrutiny Working Group, 26 January 2009. Attached marked 'SC74' (pages 116 - 117).

16. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES
HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH AS MATTERS OF URGENCY

To: All Members of the Scrutiny Commission with a copy to all other Members of the Council.

NOTE: AGENDA ITEMS AGAINST WHICH THE WORD "RESOLVED" APPEARS ARE MATTERS WHICH ARE DELEGATED TO THE COMMISSION FOR A DECISION. OTHER MATTERS ON THIS AGENDA WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL.

HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

8 JANUARY 2009 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr MR Lay - Chairman
Mrs R Camamile - Joint Vice-Chairman
Mr P Hall - Joint Vice-Chairman

Mr DM Gould, Mrs A Hall, Mr DW Inman, Mr CG Joyce, Mr C Ladkin, Mr R Mayne, Dr JR Moore, Mr K Morrell, Mr K Nichols and Mrs S Sprason.

Officers in attendance: Mr S Atkinson, Mr D Bunker, Mrs T Darke, Miss L Horton, Mr S Kohli, Miss R Owen and Mr TM Prowse.

346 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Mr Batty, Mr Bessant and Mrs Witherford with the substitution of Mr Mayne for Mrs Witherford authorised in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.3.

347 **MINUTES (SC54)**

On the motion of Mr Nichols, seconded by Mrs Hall, it was

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2008 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

Dr Moore arrived at 6.31pm.

During confirmation of the minutes, Mr Ladkin said he had asked a question at the previous meeting, to which officers said they would respond by email, but he had received no response. He repeated the question as follows, and was promised a response within three working days:

“Given the movement of the economy into recession since the appointment of the Tin Hat Partnership as developers of the Bus Station Site, what is the current position with regard to the financial viability of this consortium?”

348 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared at this stage.

349 CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL (SC55)

The Scrutiny Commission received a report which had been referred by the Finance & Audit Services Select Committee in December 2008 on the position regarding Concessionary Travel for the year 2008/09.

It was reported that the original estimates received from the County Council in autumn 2007 indicated that the cost of the new concessions would be in the range of £400,000 to £500,000. The budget for 2007/08 which funded the previous local scheme was £612,000. This budget was retained in order to provide some headroom against the higher estimate of £500,000. This estimate from the County Council changed in October 2008 to just over £760,000 and then in November 2008 to just under £880,000. Members were informed that revised estimates had been prepared for the remainder of this financial year and a provisional estimate of £900,000 for 2009/10.

Members were informed that the reasons for this increase had been challenged on several occasions but no explanations were forthcoming. It was explained that one factor may be the increase in bus passes issued in the Borough which had risen from 2,600 in February 2006 to 16,000 in September 2008. It was also felt that the increase in the County Council's charges for the scheme was not an equal percentage throughout all districts. It could not therefore be claimed that the increase was due to rising fuel costs as the increase for Hinckley and Bosworth was disproportionate to the rest of the Leicestershire Districts.

Members enquired about the possibility of undertaking an independent review of scheme, and in response officers stated that other districts had expressed an interest in a joint review.

It was felt that the current situation was unacceptable as the districts were funding the scheme but were receiving no risk assurance, and that more work should be done to achieve some assurances and pressure should be exerted upon the County Council to present the districts with an explanation about how the current situation arose.

It was proposed by Mr Lay, seconded by Mr Nichols and

RESOLVED –

- (i) A letter be written to Leicestershire County Council requesting an explanation and setting out the next steps should a response not be received;
- (ii) Should a satisfactory response not be received from the County Council, an independent review of the Concessionary Travel scheme be undertaken and the possibility of a joint district review be explored.

Mr and Mrs Hall left the meeting at 7.13pm.

350 ANTI POVERTY STRATEGY – INTERIM REPORT (SC56)

Members received a report which provided a further update on the work commissioned on behalf of the Scrutiny Commission to inform and scope an anti poverty strategy for Hinckley and Bosworth.

It was reported that a stakeholder meeting had been held and although this had not been well attended we were now in a position to draft the strategy which would go out to consultation when endorsed by the Commission. It was noted that the final report of Ci Research and a draft strategy would be brought to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Commission.

It was suggested that anti-poverty strategies produced by other countries should be looked at as they had some useful ideas. In response to a Members' request, it was confirmed that Ci Research had looked at other strategies, authorities and initiatives in the course of their work.

Mr Joyce left the meeting at 7.20pm.

Members welcomed the report and asked that these comments be taken into consideration when drafting the strategy.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the report be noted and endorsed;
- (ii) the final report by Ci Research and draft anti poverty strategy be brought to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Commission.

Mr Joyce returned at 7.23pm.

351 CPA RESULT

Members were referred to the report which was presented to Council on 15 December and which gave the result of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. Attention was drawn in particular to comments in the report about the Overview and Scrutiny function of the authority, which were all positive.

RESOLVED – the comments be noted and previous and current Members of the Scrutiny Commission and scrutiny support officers be thanked.

352 DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS (SC57)

The Scrutiny Commission was informed of the position in respect of the Section 106 contributions that had not been spent within the five year period and therefore may be clawed back, and those that were between four and five years.

It was reported that work was being undertaken with Parish Councils to try to use the £11,000 available, and a database was accessible to Parishes to

allow them to see the money available. It was noted that there were controls in place to ensure parishes intended to spend the money appropriately.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

353 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09 (SC58)

Members gave consideration to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2008/09.

RESOLVED – the Work Programme be agreed.

354 FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL DECISIONS (SC59)

Members received the Forward Plan of Executive and Council decisions. Concern was expressed with regard to the Climate Change Strategy as a decision was due to be made by Council on 24 February, but the Scrutiny Environment Group was not due to meet again until March and would not have finished looking at the strategy until then. It was requested that the timetable be examined and amended if necessary.

It was noted that the Medium Term Financial Strategy would come to the Scrutiny Commission in April and the Transport Framework Assessment SPD had also been deferred to that meeting.

RESOLVED – the Forward Plan and comments above be noted.

355 MINUTES OF SELECT COMMITTEES

Minutes of the following meetings were received:

- (i) Barwell & Earl Shilton Scrutiny Working Group, 6 October 2008 (SC60);
- (ii) Finance & Audit Services Select Committee, 3 November 2008 (SC61);
- (iii) Council Services Select Committee, 13 November 2008 (SC62);
- (iv) Scrutiny Environment Group, 9 December 2008 (SC63).

(The meeting closed at 7.49 pm)

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 12 FEBRUARY 2009

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND PLANNING SERVICES
RE: HOUSING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE CAPITAL AND REVENUE
BUDGETS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with the further information requested by Scrutiny Commission at their meeting on 16 October 2008.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members note the report.
- 2.2 That Members agree to receive six-monthly reports at Scrutiny Commission (utilising the Quarterly Partnership Reports and Management Information Packs from the Strategic Partnership Group) on the Inspace Partnership in order to provide the necessary reassurance.
- 2.3 That the need for these reports to Scrutiny Commission on the Inspace Partnership be reviewed in March 2010.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 3.1 Members are fully aware of the issues which arose in respect of the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Capital and Revenue budgets in 2007/08 and have previously been discussed at length.
- 3.2 At a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission on 16 October 2008, Members received a report entitled "Housing Repairs and Maintenance Capital and Revenue Budgets". That report brought together the findings and conclusions from several reports carried out by Echelon Consultants, RSM Bentley Jennison and the Council's external auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers.
- 3.3 Following a lengthy and detailed debate on the subject, Scrutiny Commission recommended that:-
- (i) The actions taken to address issues since March 2008 be endorsed.
 - (ii) RSM Bentley Jennison be asked to undertake further investigations with regard to open book accounting, the state of the partnership and its monitoring, to be reported back to the Commission at its meeting in January 2009.
 - (iii) A report be produced for the Council Services Select Committee with regard to the costs of the consultancy work and the additional internal work which had been necessary.

- (iv) An appraisal of open book accounting systems be undertaken after receipt of Bentley Jennison's report.
 - (v) Consideration be given to monitoring of the arrangements by an appropriate Council body.
 - (vi) Training for staff continues to be provided on financial and contract procedure rules as necessary.
- 3.4 This report advises Members on the progress which has been made in respect of those recommendations and draws to the attention of Members any further relevant information.
- 3.5 RSM Bentley Jennison have now completed their further investigations into the partnership and their final report is attached at Appendix 1. This report recognises the significant measures which were put in place by Council officers early in the 2008/09 financial year to rigorously monitor and challenge the work carried out by Inspace. Furthermore, it acknowledges the hard work undertaken by all involved in the partnership to resolve the legacy issues of 2007/08 and the positive steps taken to make further improvements.
- 3.6 In addition to the RSM Bentley Jennison report, the Housing Quality Network, who have taken a particular interest in, and undertaken research into, Open Book Partnerships, was engaged to undertake a separate independent diagnostic assessment of the partnership and the effectiveness of the open book accounting systems. Their report (attached at Appendix 2) emphasises and corroborates the deficiencies that were present in the partnership in the past, but acknowledges that the steps which have been taken jointly by the Council and Inspace have enabled the partnership to move forward positively to make further efficiencies and improvements to service within the existing arrangements. It makes recommendations also about the future of the accounting arrangements and, in common with the RSM Bentley Jennison report, suggests that the Scrutiny Commission receives a performance progress report at the half year point in 2009/10.
- 3.7 Officers recommend that the basis of the progress report be the Quarterly Partnership Report which is produced as part of the Council's Performance Management Framework and the Management Information Pack which is reported regularly to the Strategic Partnership Group.
- 3.8 It is intended that the two pieces of work outlined in Paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6 above will be the final two reports from consultants, unless this Scrutiny Commission requires otherwise. Once the costs have been finalised, a report will be prepared for the next available meeting of the Council Services Select Committee.

4. **THE TENANTS PERSPECTIVE**

- 4.1 The Chair of the Tenants Advisory Panel is perhaps the only representative who has been present throughout the partner selection process, implementation and ongoing monitoring of the contract. It is therefore important that Scrutiny are appraised of her observations on the partnership up until the present day.

- 4.2 As Chair of the Tenants Advisory Panel (TAP), she has witnessed most of the good and bad times that have occurred on both sides of the partnership. From the first stages of drawing up the tender, to the appointment of the winning bid, all the political parties, officers and tenants had an opportunity to put forward their views. Everyone was offered the same training workshops covering all aspects of the contract.
- 4.3 From the time that both sides acknowledged the problems, the approach everyone concerned has taken has resulted in a better outcome than she thought would have been possible. In the earlier part of the year she had visions of the Housing Revenue Account going to fund excessively large fees for the legal profession rather than into responsive repairs.
- 4.4 Fortunately, the officers from Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and the new management at Inspace that were dealing with the situation at the time were very committed to putting everything back on track. A lot of difficult negotiating was undertaken by both sides. The lessons learned by all parties has resulted in what she thinks is a far better structured working relationship with much clearer audit trails now available. It would be helpful to now have regular reports to the TAP on a six-monthly basis in order to be assured that the improvements continue.
- 4.5 One other thing that she mentions is that the workforce, who have continued to do the day-to-day tasks, have provided in the main an excellent service to most of the tenants. This can be verified by the satisfaction surveys that are returned by the tenants. The figures do demonstrate that the Council provides a good service.
- 4.6 The Chair of TAP wishes to emphasise that she would be happy to discuss any other issues with anyone who is willing to enter discussion on the basis of what she has learnt over the last few years in respect of this subject.

5. **THE CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION**

- 5.1 Members will be aware that the amount spent on housing repairs and maintenance has been reduced by approximately £1.35M from 2007/08 to 2008/09 as follows. The budget will be increased for 2009/10 as indicated in the table below, subject to final approval as part of the forthcoming budget process.

	2007/08 £	2008/09 £	2009/10 £
Responsive Repairs Budget	900,000	900,000	900,000
Programmed Repairs	504,770	520,770	520,770
Capital Repairs and Maintenance Budget	2,475,000*	2,022,929	2,537,929
Overspend	912,000		
Total	4,791,770	3,443,699	3,958,699

* Excludes one-off sum of £508,000 for Peggs Close.

- 5.2 It should be noted that the total budget allocated to council house repairs and maintenance has remained fairly constant for several years as indicated in the table below.

	2004/05 £	2005/06 £	2006/07 £	2007/08 £
Responsive Repairs	1,354,319	1,285,140	759,703	900,000
Programmed Repairs	390,106	480,944	467,602	504,770
Capital Repairs & Maintenance	1,991,326	2,176,149	2,526,906	2,475,000
Total	3,735,751	3,942,233	3,754,211	3,879,770

It is interesting to note that the spend on housing repairs and maintenance as far back as 2003/04 was £3,692,467 This should be considered against the budget for 2008/09 of £3,443,699.

Even if only the Retail Price Index over the period 2003/04 to 2008/09 was applied, the budgets for 2008/09 should total £4,418,820 if the level of spending were to be maintained in real terms.

- 5.3 Notwithstanding all of the budgetary pressures during 2008/09, it is anticipated that the Housing Revenue Account Capital and Revenue Maintenance expenditure can be controlled within budget.
- 5.4 Members will recall that certain operational decisions were taken at Council on 24 June 2008 in order to attempt to control spending to within the budget during 2008/09. All of those decisions have been implemented and have had the effect of significantly reducing expenditure compared to 2007/08.
- 5.5 It is appropriate at this time to draw Members attention to the fact that the current level of investment in the Council's housing stock may be insufficient in future years. Two further pieces of work are being undertaken to further inform this issue, these being:-
- * Updating the Council's Integrator stock condition database.
 - * Further consideration of the Council's 30-year Business Plan for the Council's housing stock.
- 5.6 Depending on the outcome of these two pieces of work, which are expected during 2009, Members may have to give further consideration to the issue of Stock Options Appraisal.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (SK)**

The current financial position is set out in Paragraph 5.1 above.

The measures put in place since May of this financial year by the Council and Inspace have been successful in containing the spend on the Capital (and Revenue) Housing Repairs budget(s). There is a projected overspend on works of approximately £57,000, as reported in the Council/Inspace meeting of 8 December 2008. Further work after this meeting has revealed that the projected overspend has been revised downwards by Inspace to £37,000,

following recalculation to allow for the reallocation of the Inspace General Manager. This figure is yet to be confirmed in writing.

As stated in Paragraph 5.2 above, the Housing Repairs budget (irrespective of the operational management issues experienced recently) is under significant pressure and unless the lobbying for change of the current housing subsidy system results in a successful outcome will continue to provide this Council with challenges in maintaining its homes for tenants. It is therefore now imperative that the Council gives consideration to the best option(s) for its housing stock.

7. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (AB)**

- 7.1 The Council owes a legal duty to its tenants to maintain minimum standards of repair to its housing stock, provided however that the current levels of responsive maintenance are continued the report raises no direct legal implications.

8. **CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The actions outlined in this report contribute to the corporate aim, "To secure decent, well managed and affordable homes" and will help to secure continued value for money in this area of Council activity.

9. **CONSULTATION**

- 9.1 The Chair of the Tenants Advisory Panel, the Executive Members with responsibility for Housing and Finance and the Council's partner, have been regularly updated on the financial position in respect of housing repairs and maintenance and in the steps taken to date to control the situation. Furthermore, they have been actively engaged in the steps proposed to bring further efficiencies and improved performance to this partnership in future years.

10. **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision/project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

The following significant risks associated with this report/decision were identified from this assessment:

Management of Significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating Action	Owner
Failure to deliver HRA Capital and Revenue Maintenance service within budget for 2008/09	Implementation of agreed measures	Director of Community and Planning Services

11. **RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no specific rural implications.

12. **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

Community Safety implications
Environmental implications
ICT implications
Asset Management implications
Human Resources implications

Background papers: Report to Council 24 June 2008 entitled "Review of Housing Repairs and Maintenance Capital and Revenue Budgets"
Report to Scrutiny Commission 16 October 2008 entitled "Housing Repairs and Maintenance Capital and Revenue Budgets"

Contact officer: Trevor Prowse, Director of Community and Planning Services, ext 5934



RSM Bentley Jennison

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING REPAIRS REVIEW – FOLLOW UP

January 2009

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of our follow-up review into the overspend on the HRA Capital and Revenue accounts in 2007/08, following the introduction of the Open Book accounting methodology for the partnership between the Council and the housing repairs contractor, Inspace.
- 1.2 During the course of our review we have examined the developments made to the control systems by both the Council and Inspace since June 2008.
- 1.3 Overall, we have found that there have been substantial improvements in the management of the contract by HBBC staff, and there is strong evidence to suggest that Inspace have also worked productively to tackle many of the issues that had previously arisen. There have been changes in personnel at key management levels at both the Council and Inspace since April 2008. However, it is obvious that the issues that had arisen during 2007/08 could not be resolved immediately, and we recognise that whilst progress has been good, further improvements are still needed, which both parties are committed to.
- 1.4 With regards to Inspace's management of the contract, we have noted the following:-
- i) Evidence of a willingness to work with the Council to overcome issues that have arisen;
 - ii) Although accurate figures are not available, it appears that fewer jobs are being rejected by HBBC inspectors. Whilst on face value this is good, there is some question as to whether this is a product not only of improved management controls, but also due to the reduction of work planned in 2008/09 to cover mainly the most straightforward, less costly jobs where there is less room for error in either quality or cost;
 - iii) The implementation of cost trackers for branch and production costs, and for voids. These have successfully identified areas of projected overspends, which has enabled both parties to address, analyse figures involved, and to significantly reduce costs in problem areas; and
 - iv) Whilst there have been considerable reductions in average voids costs, and in the overall contract charges, these have largely occurred due to agreed reductions in the scope of works completed. Although Inspace appear to have undertaken a number of initiatives to increase the efficiency of its internal working methodologies, there is no clear evidence as yet that this has led to reductions in charges to the Council;
- 1.5 With regards to HBBC management of the contract, we have noted the following:-

- i) Evidence of greater transparency underlying management decisions and actions;
- ii) The formal, signed agreement with Inspace, dated 30th October 2008 of a Key Performance Indicator Handbook to provide the basis for monitoring quality issues;
- iii) Evidence that general communication and management of the contract has improved ensuring that the reduced budget of £2 million is currently projected to be exceeded by only £32,000 after nine months of the year (by comparison, in 2007/08 expenditure had already reached £2,097, 000);
- iv) Introduction of systems to ensure that invoices from Inspace are only signed off once they have been checked for reasonableness and accuracy; and
- v) The successful co-operation and continuation of the Partnership with Inspace after the exposure of severe flaws in the working arrangements in 2007/08.

Recommendations

- 1) We have noted throughout this review that the levels of co-operation and communication between the Council and Inspace have significantly improved since 2007/08. It is also apparent that throughout 2008/09 to date, the two parties have worked together to agree new targets, working methodologies and areas of potential savings.

Although many of the areas have been minuted from their review by the various Partnership management bodies (COG, FPG, SPG) and a formal agreement of 4th September 2008 between the Council and Inspace, there is little evidence of documented/contractual agreement. Given the past history of this Partnership and also on-going differences of opinion (e.g. staffing requirements, finance costs to avoid the potential for any misunderstandings) all "agreements" reached between the two parties should be formally documented and signed off by appropriate representatives.

- 2) A member of the Housing department now devotes a large proportion of their time to checking Inspace invoice details. This is work which was not previously undertaken, and therefore in our opinion this was an oversight on the part of the Council when the Partnership working arrangements first commenced. The Council had already recognised this deficiency by June 2008 and should continue its practice of checking all Inspace invoices prior to payment being released, should formalise these checking procedures and should allow for this cost within future budgeting calculations.
- 3) The Council should ensure that relevant staff receives appropriate training regarding "Open Book" practices, and that documented procedures (e.g. variation order process) are compiled as and when monitoring systems are agreed and have been stabilised. We are aware that there have been a number of developments in this area since May 2008.
- 4) The extent to which Inspace's efficiency initiatives are impacting on Council costs is still not apparent. It would be beneficial if Inspace could demonstrate actual reductions in costs.

- 5) Full monitoring of Inspace's improvements cannot be achieved unless the Council can accurately record numbers and reasons for jobs rejected. Work to enable the production of such information should be progressed as a matter of priority.
- 6) The Council should ensure that the Orchard schedule of rates is uplifted for inflation each year which was standard practice in 2006 and 2007, in order that it can be maintained as a usable initial indicator of job costs.
- 7) Given that the Carr House premises lease is due for renewal in 2010, it would also be sensible to investigate the potential for relocating to cheaper premises. Given the current economic climate the Council may find that rental rates are more favourable and competitive. Finally, we are aware that the Council owns commercial properties which are currently empty, and these should be reviewed in the first instance, as there may well be savings to the Council in respect of rental cost and possible NNDR.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Following the 2007/08 overspend on the HRA Capital and Revenue accounts, we completed a review of a number of issues relating to how the overspend occurred, and what the implications are for the Council. We produced a report covering these issues in June 2008.

2.2 The fieldwork for this second report was undertaken during December 2008 and covers both the current position regarding housing repairs completion, costs and payments, and also developments in these areas since June 2008.

2.3 A copy of the Project Brief for this work is at Appendix A of this report.

2.4 During the course of the review we interviewed the following HBBC Officers:-

Sanjiv Kohli	Director of Finance
Trevor Prowse	Director of Community and Planning Services
Sharon Stacey	Head of Community Services (Housing)
Elaine Bickley	Housing Payments Officer
Tony Hallard	Housing Responsive Maintenance Manager
Ilyas Bham	Group Accountant (responsible for Capital Accounting)
Heidi Green	Repairs Scheduler (Carr House)
Sarah Moore	Housing Accountant

2.5 We also interviewed the following Inspace staff:-

Derek Dyer	General Manager (Carr House)
Mark Ellis	Production Manager
Sue Hibbins	Administrative Officer with responsibility for transferring information from Vixen to Orchard

2.6 As well as interviewing the above personnel, our audit methodology also included the following:-

- Review of documents including:-
 1. Meeting minutes for Inspace Financial Planning Group (FPG); Core Operational Group (COG); and Strategic Partnering Group (SPG);
 2. Meeting minutes for Strategic Leadership Board; and
 3. Review of Branch costs / production overheads – details supplied by Inspace

We reviewed samples of jobs undertaken during 2008/09, records on both the Orchard and the Vixen systems and traced these to supporting information. Our sampling plan was designed using a judgemental approach based on a risk assessment of the differences between Orchard and Vixen.

3 DETAILED FINDINGS – HOUSING REPAIRS – POSITION AT DECEMBER 2008

The following sections of the report detail our findings from the review of the systems in place at December 2008. These findings are grouped under headings as per our Project Brief (Appendix A). Where appropriate, we have also included discussion of issues that arose during our previous review in May 2008.

3.1 Performance of unnecessary responsive repair work.

Following the overspend in 2007/08, the Council put into effect a revised schedule of works to be completed, which basically entailed ceasing all non-essential works, and thus concentrating primarily on responsive repairs and voids.

In addition, the Council set an absolute budget limit of £2 million for the 2008/09 year, which is a reduction from the £2.4 million previously planned. The Council has also repeatedly stressed that this limit cannot be exceeded and that there will be no allowance for extensions or additions. We confirmed that progress against these constraints is reviewed monthly at meetings of the Financial Planning Group, (FPG) (e.g. 13th May 2008) and the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) (e.g. 25th June, 30th October).

Figures show that direct costs for works in 2007/08 amounted to £2,358,512, whilst in 2008/09 to date these only total £880,125. Key areas of saving include:- General Dwelling works (-£207,603), Major Voids (-£306,186), Kitchens (-145,937), PVC Doors (-£110,984), Room enhancements (-130,708), Kitchen works (107,945), Roofing (-£40,087), Environmental (-£165,845), Timber door replacements (-£38,012), and Flooring works (-£1,478,386). There have been no increases of works in any area.

We also confirmed that the agendas for the FPG meetings are more focussed than in the past on reviewing specific areas of concern as they arise, as well as monitoring outturn figures. Issues reviewed in FPG meetings for October and November 2008 included Order Monitoring and Voids Costs; Invoice Review, payment and reconciliation; KPI review, 2008/09 Budget and Task orders, and Cost tracker – sign offs.

Minutes of the FPG meetings show that all have been attended by the Council's Head of Community Services (Housing), and by at least one member of the Council's Finance Department, along with other HBBC staff as appropriate to the matters under discussion. The Director of Community and Planning Services, the Council's SLB representative, has also attended all SPG meetings since May 2008. Finally, we confirmed that COG and FPG Executive Summaries are agreed by both parties prior to presentation at SPG.

There is a projected overspend on works of approximately £57,000 (As per Council / Inspace meeting notes, 8th December 2008) for the year, and that discussions were on-going between the Council and Inspace to reduce this. However, the clear identification of this projected overspend, and the transparent, reasoned and joint approach to tackling it does reflect an improvement on how such issues were dealt with in 2007/08. Further discussions revealed that the projected overspend has been revised downwards by Inspace to £37,000, following recalculation to allow for the reallocation of the Inspace General Manager. However, we have yet to have this projected figure confirmed in writing.

The issue of voids is problematical, as works on these are essentially demand led for revenue income, whilst the available budget is fixed. In our previous review we noted that there had been a "Failure to manage voids works in line with expected budgets, or to provide adequate and timely explanation for increases in void costs". In this review we have examined the steps taken by both the Council and Inspace to reduce costs in this area, which include limiting the specifications for void works to only what is necessary, and having managers from both parties inspecting, agreeing and signing off completed works. Void issues are considered on a monthly basis by representatives from both parties.

In addition, in a meeting between the Council and Inspace on 8th December 2008 it was further agreed that HBBC would "provide a list of "minimal labour" work for more general tasks which could be undertaken. Once approved, these works will be isolated for monitoring purposes so that the labour only element is transparent".

From discussions with staff we are aware that costs for kitchens and electrical works within void properties are still an issue. The need for new kitchens appears to stem from a historic lack of investment in the area, and the electrical costs are a result of increased health and safety legislation, as well as the lack of investment in the past.

We reviewed the available Key Performance Indicator data for Average Voids costs. The target for this has been agreed by the Council and Inspace as £1,308.00 at the beginning of the year, although this has now been changed to £2,360.00. We understand that the figure was changed following a review of average voids costs, as mentioned in the minutes of the 27th November 2008 SPG meeting. However, there does not appear to be any formal agreement to the change. We noted from our previous review that average void costs in 2007/08 had been running at £3,372 for houses and bungalows, and £2,105 for sheltered and general needs accommodation properties. Monthly average costs for voids works during the year had varied between £1,657 in September to £2,158 in August, and the figure quoted in the November COG report was that 26 voids had been completed in the month, at an average cost of £1,623.08.

Finally on this point, we note that the Key Performance Indicator handbook, which had been an area of contention throughout the Partnership to date, was finally signed off by the FPG in October 2008. We understand from HBBC management that the Booklet is being used for guidance in 2008/09, and will be revisited for 2009/10 to ensure that all Indicators remain relevant and useful.

3.2 Failure to enforce the scheme of delegation: cost overruns: unnecessary day works/ variation orders.

As in 2007/08, the "Open Book" agreement means that whilst the Council can set estimate costs for jobs, as per the Orchard schedule of rates, the outturn costs will differ as firstly, the

Schedule is now out-of-date, and secondly, Inspace will record and charge actual costs for jobs. In our previous review we examined a number of these actual costs, and we found a number of examples where the costs charged by Inspace could not be substantiated.

There was an issue in 2007/08 with variation orders being made without due explanation, which meant that final costs from Inspace for jobs completed often appeared to bear little or no relation to the job originally ordered by the Council.

The variation process has now been altered, so that where Inspace request a variation, this must be agreed by HBBC and signed off on the Orchard system. Whilst many of these variations are proposed and agreed by telephone, we reviewed the Orchard system to ensure that the records were being maintained. We are able to confirm that the trail of variations now provides a more accurate reflection of the works, from initial order to final completion, than had previously been the case. Although staff appears to understand how the new systems work, there is no formal documentation underlying the processes.

We also understand that this new process has led to a reduction in the numbers of jobs rejected by HBBC inspectors, as they are now more aware of how jobs have progressed, and the reasons for alterations have been properly recorded and agreed. Unfortunately, however, the Council currently does not have the ability to properly count rejections in order to make comparisons with the previous year regarding the numbers involved, or the split between rejections for reasons of cost, reasonableness or quality.

In our follow up review we again drilled down into the detail of the costs being recorded by Inspace on their Vixen system, and we reviewed a sample of 35 items of documentary evidence to support these costs, including supplier invoices and tradesmen timesheets. Our testing found that there was a clear trail showing the variation process recorded on Orchard in all cases. We also found that Inspace were able to provide supporting documentation to evidence costs charges (labour or materials) in all cases examined.

Our previous review noted a failure to manage works to ensure that quality was maintained and costs were reasonable. We commented that Inspace inspections of works appeared to be geared more towards internal monitoring issues, including health and safety and cleanliness of vehicles, rather than to ensuring the quality / reasonableness of works. In addition, we found that the checks had not been meeting the 10% required under the terms of the Partnership agreement. Finally we confirmed that the Management Information Packs provided by Inspace contained variable amounts of detail, but did not record any numbers or results of Inspace post-inspections.

Our current review found that the situation in this area had improved. Inspace are now undertaking post-inspections in line with expectations, are completing the required numbers, and are reporting these on a monthly basis in the COG reports, and through the Monthly Information Packs. We also noted that the MIPS now show the type of information regarding performance measures and issues which is useful for the monitoring of the contract progress.

Finally, we note that the Orchard Schedule of rates was not uplifted for inflation in 2008. Although the schedule itself now dates back to 2005, and is therefore out of date, the annual

uplift that has occurred each year since has helped to maintain it for use as a reasonable initial indicator of costs.

3.3 Losses due to fraud or error, inefficient processing or inappropriate activity.

We reviewed the systems now in place to ensure that jobs are accurately recorded, efficiently completed and checked, and that amounts invoiced by Inspace reflect costs incurred. We checked to ensure that issues previously identified in this area have been effectively addressed by the Council and Inspace.

A key finding from our earlier review was that there had been a failure to provide a workable interface (IT based or otherwise) which could supply HBBC with information necessary to the timely review of completed jobs and the checking of invoice information.

The original review noted that the onus of responsibility for providing this interface lay with Inspace, and that the delay with its introduction severely weakened the Council's ability to review and monitor job completions and associated Inspace invoices. At the time of writing this second report, we understand that considerable progress has been made with the interface, but that it is still not operational, despite a "go live" date planned for the 3rd December 2008. We are aware, following our review of the Executive Summary for the COG Report November 2008 that the current delays are of a technical nature, caused by IT issues at the Orchard / Council end of the system, rather than due to Inspace. This situation has been confirmed by HBBC management. The issue is that the system is over-writing original order information, rather than showing the entire audit trail of the progress of the job, and obviously this trail is required to ensure that all developments can be assessed and ratified.

Our earlier review also noted that there had been a failure to support "actual" costs charged with sufficient documentation to justify costs. In our first review we examined a number of invoices received from Inspace in detail, and we traced these to the Inspace Vixen system, which records all actual costs / charges for each job. We then selected a number of items listed on Vixen and attempted to check these against supporting documentation, including timesheets and supplier invoices. However, we found a number of items recorded on Vixen, but for which no supporting documentation could be found, and this cast doubt on the overall veracity of Inspace invoices.

We repeated this exercise during the current review. As stated at 3.2, for each of our total sample of 35 jobs, we again checked down to an item included in the Inspace costs on Vixen, and matched the charge to supporting documents. On this occasion, we did not find any discrepancies. Whilst any sample testing cannot guarantee one hundred percent confidence that all items are appropriate, we consider that given the relative ease with which discrepancies were found last year, the new testing gives confidence that Inspace's record keeping and more importantly, its ability to justify charges made, have improved. However, we are aware that issues do still arise, as jobs are still being rejected through HBBC checks.

In our first review we acknowledged that there had been a failure to ensure that invoice claims only related to jobs that had been undertaken to a reasonable standard and at a reasonable cost. In discussion with staff we found that HBBC have adopted a "back to basics" approach with regards to invoice checking, and these are now checked manually by a member of the Housing Department. We have stated elsewhere that this is an essential check, and one which

should have been in place since the beginning of the Partnership arrangements. Currently, the Council review any job invoiced over £100, and a random selection of jobs for lesser amounts. Inspace provide a spreadsheet of the full costs charged, covering labour, materials, subcontractor costs, and plant. If necessary, HBBC can ask for further information.

The manual check performed by HBBC is similar to the sample audit checking that we have undertaken, as described above, but on a larger, more regular scale. Staff state that jobs are still rejected, and that Inspace will often agree the reasons for these. Currently, there is no monitoring of the extent or number of rejections, or any analysis of them. We understand that the Council is currently attempting to set up systems which will enable such monitoring. We believe that this is essential if Inspace's performance is to be properly monitored and judged. At the moment, whilst HBBC staff generally state that they think that the situation has improved since 2007/08, and that less jobs are being rejected for any reason, until true numbers are known there cannot be any proper judgement as to how significant the improvement has been, nor whether Inspace are now performing in line with expectations and industry standards.

A large part of the problem with checking the accuracy of Inspace invoices revolved around the time delay in completed job details reaching Orchard, and with post inspections only being generated once this has happened. Essentially this is caused by the time taken by Inspace to compile all the relevant details onto its Vixen system, and then the time taken to manually transfer the costs information from Vixen to Orchard.

There was also an issue that jobs might be included in Inspace invoices as complete, but that additional costs would then be charged against the job. This was caused by Inspace tradesmen not always realising that although their part of a job might be complete (e.g. delivery of a carpet), there were still further stages of the job (e.g. fitting the carpet) to be undertaken before the job as a whole could be signed off as complete. In addition, there were issues arising from the late submission of invoices to Inspace from sub-contractors.

We noted that the Council and Inspace have tried to address these problems at a meeting on 8th December 2008 where it was agreed that:-

- "Inspace (were) to implement a target of six weeks from practical to financial completion to HBBC. Inspace is implementing a target of four weeks for sub-contractors to finalise costs with Inspace;
- HBBC to close individual jobs six weeks after practical completion and to monitor late submissions; and
- Review effectiveness of processes in three months".

It is also intended that the Vixen / Orchard interface will substantially speed up the process.

The final new control in this area is that the Council no longer pays the Inspace invoices until all checks have been completed, and any discrepancies have been agreed and signed off by both parties. We confirmed that a member of the Finance department has the responsibility for monitoring all invoices and payments to Inspace. This has also helped to ensure that payments that have been outstanding from 2007/08 can be tracked and monitored correctly.

3.4 Failure to meet emergency repair targets.

There was a risk that as the Council and Inspace attempted to cut back on the overall repairs programme, this might lead to an adverse affect on the efficiency with which emergency repairs have been completed.

We confirmed that the Council and Inspace have now agreed a Key Performance Indicator for monitoring "Average completed time – works raised in the month". The figures for the period April June 2008, showed that responsiveness for P1 (emergency – to be completed within 24 hours) jobs fell from 98 to 96.40 per cent, against a target of 96.40, but that this has generally picked up again to show performance rates of 95.12 %, 99.13%, and 97% for September, October and November respectively .

We also note that there does not appear to have been any increase in complaints from members of the public. The KPI for Resident Satisfaction for May to July 2008 actually shows an increase from just over 80 % to just below 100 %. In addition, the Resident Satisfaction for new homes after void works was also consistently above the 80% target, with an average of 92% for the year to date.

3.5 Failure to carry out pre and/or, post inspections: Performance of unnecessary work and substandard work, leading to poor value for money.

We noted in our first report that:-

"It is apparent from the excessive numbers of jobs being rejected by HBBC inspectors that Inspace have exercised insufficient management control of their own to ensure that works reached a generally acceptable standard. We note that Para 6.24 of the contract, under "Administration of the Contract", states that:-

"The Contractor will carry out a minimum 10% post inspections of all orders and submit a summary report on the results to HBBC on a monthly basis".

We have performed a review of Inspace inspection records, and found that these mainly took place during the works, and that they were focussed towards Inspace internal monitoring (workmen being on-site / health and safety / cleanliness of

vehicles), rather than on the quality / reasonableness of the job, which was very rarely mentioned or recorded in any detail. Although, there appears to be a large number of such checks undertaken, Derek Dyer, the Inspace, General Manager stated to us that Inspace had not been meeting the 10% requirement. In any case, in our opinion the monitoring type checking that was undertaken did not represent post inspection checks of the type that we would normally be expected for this kind of work, which would concentrate more on the detail of the actual work completed”.

We also stated that:-

“It is also apparent that if Inspace had properly performed the 10% post inspection checks as required by Para 6.24 of the contract, this would have acted as a major control in limiting poor quality of works or obvious over-charges”.

During our current review Inspace management confirmed that the required levels of inspections were now being undertaken, and that numbers are reported in the Management Information Packs provided on a monthly basis to the Strategic Partnering Group. Three types of inspection are performed, namely 1) Work in progress / Health and safety checks; 2) ad hoc in process inspections; and 3) the post inspections of 10 % of jobs as required by the contract, and for which forms are completed by the inspectors.

We reviewed Inspace's records of inspections for September and October 2008, and confirmed that the numbers reported were correct. The inspection reports themselves appear to be more geared towards assessing the quality of the work completed, rather than noting peripheral issues. We also verified that the numbers are reported in the Inspace MIPS, and in the COG reports.

The available KPI for this area, on Quality Defects, shows that numbers rose to nearly 20 % in May 2008, but fell back to virtually nil in July 2008. However, as discussed at 3.3, there appears to be a gap in the information available from HBBC as to the numbers of works that have been rejected.

3.6 Failure to review annual expenditure by contractor to determine actual costs.

Our May 2008 review noted a number of omissions and failures on the part of HBBC to effectively monitor and report upon the performance of Inspace, ensuring continuing effective progress of the repairs. In this section, we review these points to ensure that improvements have been made so that performance is now properly monitored, questioned, and actioned as necessary.

Our main conclusions in this area were that HBBC management did not obtain sufficient information from Inspace to explain higher than expected costs, and that middle managers did not notify senior management that Inspace were failing to provide hard evidence to explain higher than expected costs / obtain the support of senior management to progress this matter with Inspace.

As discussed in Sections 3.1 – 3.5 on the previous pages there is evidence to show that there has been substantial improvement in this area, but in summary, the measures include:-

- The setting of the budget at £2 million, with no funding available for any overspends;
- Monthly FPG meetings and reports;
- Monthly COG meetings and reports;
- Monthly SPG meetings and reports;
- The establishment of a formal cost tracking mechanism as of September 2008;
- Improvements in the variation order process;
- Voids pre-estimates system to help minimise costs;
- The agreement of KPIs and their monthly reporting;
- Weekly target failure reporting;
- Review of work specifications by supervisors to agree minimum requirements;
- Monthly reports to COG, i.e. numbers of orders raised, by category; and
- HBBC approval of all jobs over £150.00 (was initially over £200.00);

We also found initially that HBBC staff had not ensured that they had received sufficient training or instruction to be able to understand and deal with the more complex issues relating to both the "Open Book" concept and the partnership contract terms and conditions overall. In our current review we have found that there has been specific training for staff in this area, but there are no documented procedures for the systems in place. These will need to be complied once the system has reached a stable state. We accept that the systems have been in a state of continuous development over the last 8 or 9 months.

3.7 Failure to follow quotation and tendering procedures where appropriate.

Our last review concluded that there had been a failure to show evidence of steps to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations to increase the value for money of the partnership arrangement

One of the expected benefits of the partnership arrangement was that the contractor would be able to use its (private sector) skills and experience to maximise efficiency and effectiveness. Our initial review noted little if any evidence that Inspace were achieving such efficiencies, and therefore the Council was not benefiting from the Partnership.

We particularly noted there was no evidence that Inspace were making use of bulk trade agreements with suppliers, which we would have expected to exist for an organisation of Inspace's size. In discussion with Inspace management, we were assured that the company now purchases the majority of its materials from only three suppliers, Travis Perkins, Homebase and a specialist plumbers' merchant. Our testing of a sample of jobs and the materials used did confirm that this appeared to be the case.

In discussion with Inspace management we noted that since May 2008, Inspace claim to have undertaken a number of initiatives to enhance its working methods, and to make savings. These included changes to the vehicle fleet (i.e. downsizing from Transit to Transporter vans),

purchasing fuel only from cheap suppliers, (Morrisons), centralised purchasing arrangements (Travis Perkins, Homebase), and improved work scheduling to cut travel times and costs. Whilst all such measures are to be welcomed, to date there is little evidence that savings from such measures are feeding through to reductions in charges to the Council. We acknowledge that there have been considerable reductions in average void costs, and in the overall contract charges, but these have largely occurred due to agreed reductions in the scope of works completed.

We would also expect savings to become apparent through reductions across the year in branch costs and production overheads, but based on the provisional costs provided by Inspace up to 31st December 2008, there are no obvious areas of saving. This position needs to be addressed.

3.8 Poor decision making, due to poor quality or timeliness of information provided to management.

Our previous review concluded that Inspace had been failing to report to HBBC on a monthly basis with sufficient information to enable HBBC to properly monitor progress, and there were a number of areas of concern regarding this issue. These included the overall problem of the interface between Orchard and Vixen, and the inherent problems of checking invoice information, the provision of useful and timely management information from Inspace to the Council (via the monthly Management Information Packs).

We have discussed above the improvements that now appear to have been made regarding the communication and consideration of information, and also the delays that are still occurring with the submission of completed job costs from Vixen to Orchard.

Overall, we believe that this area is no longer a cause for concern, for the following reasons; i) the increased communications between the two parties, which is focussed on the issues that matter; ii) the agreements regarding the supply of information as requested; and iii) the agreement to only pay monthly invoices once the Council has been able to check details to its satisfaction (and thus effectively "signing off" invoices in monthly stages).

Nonetheless, we are aware that there have been a number of instances during the year to date where information requested by the Council has not been forthcoming, or has taken longer than expected to be provided. In particular, we are aware that Council staff had requested more up-to-date information on branch and production costs. When we started this review in mid-December, these costs were only available to the end of September. Although we then requested – and were supplied – this information to the end of December, there was no explanation why more up-to-date costs had not been provided to the Council. (Further discussion of these costs is included below, in Section 6). It should be noted that these are costs that Inspace are recharging to the Council, and thus it is necessary that Inspace is able to promptly provide any requested supporting evidence to enable the Council to review, monitor and reasonably authorise payment for these charges.

We also noted in the past that backlogs of orders waiting to be transferred from Vixen to Inspace had risen. At the time of the last audit this backlog had reached over 3,000, however, this backlog has been successfully reduced, and as of December 2008, only 85 orders were awaiting transfer.

4. FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS FROM JUNE 2008 REPORT

4.1 The points listed below are the main finding headings from the report issued in June 2008. Each of these has been re-examined within the context of the follow-up review, and references to consideration of each point are shown as follows:-

- Failing to provide a workable interface (IT based or otherwise) which could supply HBBC with information necessary for the timely review of completed jobs and the checking of invoice information (see 3.3 above);
- Failing to support "actual" costs charged with sufficient documentation to justify costs(see 3.3 above);
- Failing to report to HBBC on a monthly basis with sufficient information to enable HBBC to properly monitor progress (see 3.8 above);
- Failure to show evidence of steps to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations to increase the value for money of the partnership arrangement (see 3.7 above);
- Failure to manage void works in line with expected budgets, or to provide adequate and timely explanation for increases in void costs (see 3.1 above);
- Failure to manage works generally to ensure that quality was maintained and costs were reasonable (see 3.2 above);
- Failing to ensure that a reasonable proportion (target 90%) of works undertaken were completed either to acceptable standards and within reasonable costs (see 3.5 above);
- Failing to undertake post-inspections of completed works to ensure that such standards were being met (see 3.5 above);
- Failure to ensure that invoice claims only related to jobs that had been undertaken to a reasonable standard and at a reasonable cost (see 3.3 above).

In addition, the first report discussed a number of issues regarding management failings within HBBC. Measures taken since May 2008 are discussed and summarised at section 3.6 above.

5. DETAILED FINDINGS – OTHER ISSUES

5.1 As stated previously at 1.6 we considered a number of wider issues in relation to the partnership, and these issues are summarised in the following sections:-

- Review of HBBC testing on housing repairs jobs (i.e. checks, inspections and processes introduced since May / June 2008);- see above at 3.1 – 3.8.
- Review the extent to which information received by HBBC re Inspace job costs is timely – see above at 3.1 – 3.8.
- Review information received (from Inspace) and assess the extent that this allows Housing staff to verify completed jobs on a monthly basis; - see above at 3.1 – 3.8
- Ensure that payments being made to Inspace are in accordance with contract terms, especially for those payments on account;

The payment terms currently in place are as stated at Paragraph 4.12 – Payment, or the Partnership agreement. These are:-

4.12.1 “Payment will be made as follows,

4.12.2 “Responsive repair, Voids, Planned Works, Local Overhead costs, base profit and central overhead

On the 14th of each month the following invoice procedure will take effect

1/12th of the AGMP will be invoiced by Inspace. Hence the monthly invoice will be £201,783.16 plus VAT. A reconciliation sum will be added to or deducted from this sum and this will be established by calculating the open book actual costs incurred in the previous month plus all mark ups and add-ons and this figure will be subtracted from the fixed as set out above £201,783.16.

The Council and Inspace discussed this issue at a meeting on 8th December 2008. The minutes of this meeting state that:-

“Clarification of Contract Issues:-

(a) 1/12th On Account Payment and Payment Method

Although it appears that it was not the original intention of the contract to pay 1/12 AMP, Mark Gelder (Inspace) explained that this is the general practice across Inspace partnerships and avoids the need for finance charges to be imposed. He also clarified that now the position is under control, adjustments should be minimal.”

We note that although Inspace and the Council have developed a number of “agreements” over the course of the past 10 months, these have never been formally ratified. In order that there should be no further room for misunderstanding or

misinterpretation by either party, we have advised that any agreement that results in a change to the contract terms and conditions should be formally documented and signed off as such.

- Review Branch costs and arrive at a conclusion with regard reasonableness, given the total value of the contract.

We initially reviewed the Inspace Branch costs and Production overheads for the first six months of 2008/09 year. At the time we started this review, costs were only available up to the end of September. We noted a number of costs which we felt needed further explanation in order for us to be able to ensure that they could be justified. These included salaries, job descriptions, time allocations, safety equipment charges, consultants' fees, marketing costs, rent and service charges, computer costs, finance charges, and certain charges for remedial works and supervision. We contacted Inspace in December 2008 with a list of the information required, and we reviewed the information provided in January 2009. Inspace were able to provide supporting information to evidence the calculation and relevance for most items requested. However, there were four areas where we have yet to be satisfied that all costs are necessary and appropriate. These are as follows:-

- 1) Finance Costs - £36,094.44 April – December 2008 (Provisional Inspace charge). These costs are described by Inspace as "Interest charges and 9% charge on capital employed, calculated on a monthly basis". We have yet to be able to substantiate the contractual obligation on the Council to pay for such charges. Inspace management have claimed that these have been paid and agreed by the Council for a number of months dating back to 2007/08. However, HBBC managers have stated that although such costs may have been paid in the past, they have yet to agree that such sums are in fact properly applicable. We now understand that the Council are in the process of discussing these costs further with Inspace. See also above in the discussion of the 1/12 payment method, where it is recorded that Inspace prefer the method as it "avoids the need for finance charges to be imposed".
- 2) Staffing costs - £23,208.36 per month. We noted that Inspace employ 11.5 administrative and management staff for the Hinckley contract, to oversee and support the work of 23 tradesmen. Inspace have provided us with salary details for these staff, together with job descriptions. Inspace management have assured us that this ratio is now normal, given the constraints on health and safety and supervision. We are not convinced that such numbers really are necessary, and certainly not on a full-time basis. We understand in discussions with HBBC management that concerns have been raised, and that measures are being taken over the coming months to address the situation and to reduce costs in this area.
- 3) Mobile phones – £7,793.34 as at 31st December (provisional). We understand that mobile phone usage is necessary to the contract terms, however Inspace need to show what monitoring of (non-company) usage occurs, and the steps taken to ensure the most efficient contract terms are obtained.
- 4) Regarding the various initiatives put forward by Inspace as evidence of increased efficiency (i.e. changes to vehicle fleet, purchasing fuel only from cheap suppliers, (Morrisons), centralised purchasing arrangements (Travis Perkins, Homebase),

improved work scheduling, we have asked for an indication as to when such initiatives will begin to feed through to HBBC in terms of actual reduced costs, and an estimate of the potential financial effect of each. Inspace have suggested that the benefits can be seen through the decrease in costs for void works. However, we were under the impression that these reductions had largely been caused by more careful specifications of void requirements, rather than through more general measures.

We also undertook a brief review of nine members of HBBC staff and the "extra" time / costs that they have used since May 2008 in firstly dealing with issues arising from the previous problems identified with the contract, and secondly with carrying out monitoring of the contract over and above what should normally be expected or required if the contract had been functioning as intended. The staff included the Directors of Finance and ICT and of Community and Planning Services, and other members of the Finance and Housing Departments.

From their replies, we estimated that over a 30 week period from early June onwards, approximately £14,900 of staff time had been used in dealing with issues arising from the past operation of the contract, and a further £26,000 had been spent on monitoring which should not be necessary. We also noted that there is a member of the Housing department now has the responsibility for detailed checking of Inspace invoices. We believe that this work should have been undertaken since the beginning of the contract and that the Council originally failed to allow for this cost. Therefore, we have not included this cost in the above calculations.

We also note that all Branch costs and Production overheads are now specifically reviewed by a member of the Finance department, although we also found that in late December 2008, Inspace had not provided these costs beyond the end of September.

Finally, we considered the Premises costs for the Carr House office currently used by Inspace, and also accommodating Council call centre staff and Repairs Inspectors. The lease for the premises has cost approximately £15,000 in the year to date, and is due for renewal in 2010. It may well be the case that there will be scope for reassessment of the premises requirements.

Appendix A

Assignment Planning Sheet

Organisation Name:	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Periodic Plan Date:	2008/09
Auditable Area:	Repairs
Report Reference:	xx.08/09

Scope and Background

Objective of the area under review:	To ensure that the repairs contract is managed and monitored in an effective and efficient manner.
Areas for consideration as part of the audit:	Contractor performance monitoring and reporting; Repairs expenditure against budgets; Management Information;
Limitations to the scope of the audit:	We will not form an opinion on whether value for money has been delivered by the Contractors.

Objectives of Audit

To evaluate the adequacy of control in the areas under review and the extent to which controls have been applied, with a view to providing an opinion to the extent with which risks in this area are managed.	
Risks to:	
That the risks are managed in order to achieve the organisation's objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance of unnecessary responsive repair work. • Failure to enforce the scheme of delegation: cost overruns: unnecessary day works/ variation orders. • Losses due to fraud or error, inefficient processing or inappropriate activity. • Failure to meet emergency repair targets. • Failure to carryout pre and/or, post inspections: Performance of unnecessary work and substandard work, leading to poor value for money. • Failure to review annual expenditure by contractor to determine actual costs. • Failure to follow quotation and tendering procedures where appropriate. • Poor decision making, due to poor quality or timeliness of information provided to management.

Resources

Organisation Sponsor:	Sanjiv Kohli; Director of Finance, Sharon Stacey; Head of Community Services (Housing).
Auditors:	Peter Wood; Partner, Rob Barnett; Client Manager, Colin Roxburgh; Senior Auditor, Sam McNulty; Senior Auditor.
Audit Start Date:	08 December 2008
Fieldwork Completion Date:	19 December 2008
Draft Report Due:	16 January 2009
Final Report Due:	30 January 2009

Additional risk focus identified by the organisation or requested by the sponsor

1. Follow-up of initial Internal Audit report findings and conclusions.
2. Review of HBBC testing on housing repairs jobs)i.e. checks, inspections and processes introduced since May / June 2008);
3. Review the extent to which information received by HBBC re Inspace job costs is timely
4. Review information received (from Inspace) and assess the extent that this allows Housing staff to verify complete jobs on a monthly basis;
5. Ensure that payments being made to Inspace are in accordance with contract terms, especially for those payment on account;
6. Review Branch costs and arrive at a conclusion with regard reasonableness, given the total value of the contract.

**Report: review of open book arrangement –
housing maintenance**

Hinckley and Bosworth Council

JANUARY 2009

Strictly private and confidential

Contents

Section	Page number
1 Introduction and background.....	1
2 Our approach.....	1
3 Our findings.....	2
4 Recommendations.....	9

1 Introduction and background

- 1.1 Hinckley and Bosworth Council (the Council) engaged the Housing Quality Network (HQN) to undertake a desktop review of the open book arrangements it has in place with its principal maintenance contractor, Inspace.
- 1.2 The services provided by Inspace were secured in 2006 using modern methods of procurement and in common with many housing organisations. External specialist procurement support was used to assist the Council in its desire to secure the optimum procurement solution. A partnering relationship with Inspace was formed in September 2006 and migration from the Council's schedule of rates form of costing to an open book arrangement took place in April 2007.
- 1.3 The services provided by Inspace are currently the subject of a forensic examination by the Council's appointed internal auditors and the review undertaken by HQN purposely focuses on a number of areas that complement but are outside of the scope of work undertaken by the internal auditors.
- 1.4 Specifically, HQN were asked to undertake a brief but high level review of the open book arrangements and in particular consider:
 - a) How open book arrangements should operate?
 - b) Why the arrangements at Hinckley and Bosworth Council did not deliver the expected outcomes in the financial year 2007/08.
 - c) The efficacy of the current arrangements.
 - d) The extent to which the Council and its customers are benefiting from the arrangement.
 - e) The extent to which average job and project costs compare favourably or unfavourably within the market place.
 - f) An opinion on whether 'open book' is capable of delivering cost and service benefits when compared with the alternatives.

2 Our approach

- 2.1 During the time we had to complete the review we undertook an analysis of key information provided by the Council including financial and operation performance data and held discussions with key staff. We also had sight of the brief being followed by the internal auditors to ensure that our work complemented but was distinct from the audit review.
- 2.2 For clarity, we have purposely structured our report to respond to the questions required to be answered by the brief

3 Our findings

Question 1: How should Open Book arrangements operate?

- 3.1 In order to answer this question it is important to understand what it means. There are a number of interpretations but within the construction sector it is accepted to be a generic expression describing a level of client access to accounting data that would not have been available under conventional procurement methods. The level of access varies from place to place to reflect the circumstances of the partnering arrangements and the need for access to certain data to monitor performance or benefits arising.
- 3.2 Open book is not procurement or a guarantee of service but simply a preferred payment mechanism that has the potential for delivering financial and operational efficiencies. Where used well it can deliver major reductions in back-office and other transaction cost, where done badly, it masks contractors and clients inefficiencies and ignorance or poor understanding can generate significant client risk.
- 3.3 Known client benefits within the social housing maintenance sector include:
- Reduced back-office costs (invoice administration, etc)
 - Greater cost certainty
 - Allows benchmarking of cost
 - Allows for a better understanding of cost base
 - Allows for gain share and pain share arrangements (efficiency savings)
 - ***Focuses management effort to drive down costs.***
- 3.4 Known contractor benefits within the social housing maintenance sector include:
- Greater cost certainty
 - Reduces risk
 - Improves cashflow
 - Helps to establish cost saving strategies and eliminate waste
 - Allows for gain share and pain share arrangements (efficiency savings)
 - ***Focuses management effort to drive down costs.***

- 3.5 From the above it can be seen that when working well both the client and contractor benefit from the arrangement and it should also be noted that focusing on effort to drive down cost and improve efficiency is fundamental to open book. Failure to do this simply renders the status of the arrangement to that of 'cost plus' whereby the contractor recovers all costs from the client regardless of its inefficiency.
- 3.6 Within the housing sector, the use of open book for maintenance activities has recently become a common feature. The drive for this approach has primarily been from contractors but there have been a number of housing organisations that have identified operational and financial benefits from its use. There is however growing concern that envisaged benefits are not being delivered. Common reasons for this flow from one or more of the following:
- Treating open book as an easy option
 - Lack of effective client input
 - Lack of focus on improving efficiency
 - Inappropriate partnering arrangements
 - Failure to select the right partners
 - Definition of costs not agreed
 - Contractor's cost system not understood
 - Contractor's accounting procedures not in place or underdeveloped
 - Lack of willingness for contractor to provide all relevant cost information
 - Lack of understanding of partnering arrangements
 - Failure to define objectives and expectations
 - Failure to set baseline targets for performance and outcomes at the earliest opportunity
 - Failure to develop a partnership culture
 - Poor communication
 - Failure to control costs.

Typical Open book procedure

1. Define Cost

An adequate definition of cost may already be included in the contract. If not it will have to be the subject of an agreement between the parties. It will be important to differentiate between head office overheads in respect of which a percentage addition will usually be added and actual cost to ensure that there is no overlap. The definition of cost should enable the costs to be separately identified by resource such as people, equipment, plant, materials and other charges. Difficult areas are pension contributions and finance charges and how they can be allocated to individual projects.

2. Understand the Contractor's Cost System and Procedures

Typical matters to review:

- What is the project code numbering system
- How are costs recorded on site
- Work through examples by resource
- Become familiar with the contractor's proformas
- What value of work is normally subcontracted; what are the subcontract terms; how is the work valued and paid for
- Visit the site and see the costing system working in practice.

3. Understand the Contractor's Accounting Procedures

Typical matters to review:

- How are discounts credited in respect of suppliers and subcontractors
- How are national agreements with suppliers and subcontractors allocated
- How are accruals dealt with
- How are intercompany charges managed

4. Agree an Audit Strategy

An audit strategy should be agreed which deals with two main elements:

- Ensuring that the stated procedures at service level are complied with
- Ensuring that accounting procedures are correctly applied at head office

Develop a table/proforma outlining what will be audited, by whom, when, what information will be required and what questions will be asked.

Some elements of the audit process will need to remain random.

5. Agree reporting arrangements

It should be part of the auditing procedure for an audit report to be produced each month to coincide with the payment of the contractor. The object of the report is to inform the parties that established procedures are in place and are working efficiently.

Suggested Contents

- Introduction
- Audit rationale
- Persons involved
- Key clauses in the contract
- Management structures and procedures
- Key personnel
- Filing systems
- Job costing structure
- Procedure for setting budgets and financial reporting

Open book accounting procedures review

- Accounting systems
- Site and head office based procedures prior to systems input
- Accounting procedures involved in systems input

- Labour, plant and materials
- Site overheads
- Head office overheads

Adjustment to existing procedures to comply with the contract

Actual cost audit report

- Check that procedures are being complied with
- Results of audit check and recommendations

It should be noted that the above actions are in addition to those necessary to establish the operational performance parameters of the service. Typically, the majority of Key Performance Indicators will be established at the outset and form the backbone of monthly performance progress reports.

Question 2 : Why did the arrangements at Hinckley and Bosworth Council not deliver the expected outcomes in the financial year 2007/08?

3.7 Looking retrospectively at what occurred during the last financial year has revealed what we believe to be a number of contributory factors which cumulatively lead to a financial and performance position that fell short of that envisaged. These include:

- Lack of effective client input
- Lack of focus on improving efficiency
- Inappropriate partnering arrangements
- Contractor's cost system not understood
- Contractor's accounting procedures not in place or underdeveloped
- Lack of willingness for contractor to provide all relevant cost information
- Lack of understanding of partnering arrangements
- Failure to set baseline targets for performance and outcomes at the earliest opportunity

- 3.8 In strictly theoretical terms, the costing methodology in place at Hinckley and Bosworth is robust and contains all of the features of an open book arrangement that should operate well. Definitions of cost including prelims, direct overheads, indirect overheads, corporate overheads and profit are known. Regular cost reconciliations are undertaken and the arrangement is periodically subjected to a detailed audit. It is HQN's view that it is the lack of rigorous application of the agreed methodology and lack of understanding that are the main contributors to the lack of progress to use it to good effect.
- 3.9 A comprehensive suite of key performance indicators are in place but not all of these are reported on. Performance review meetings are now held to review and measure operational progress but this has not always been the case. The absence of performance reports provides clear evidence that at that particular time the approach of the client (the Council) was passive. Corrective action has been taken to address this deficiency and there are clear signs that the active stance now being taken by the client is beginning to deliver improvements on a number of fronts.
- 3.10 A key characteristic of an effective and intelligent client, is the existence of a 'single controlling mind' who is accountable for managing and developing the relationship with the service provider and ensuring that service delivery and cost commitments are met. We are told that the responsibility for this was shared by two technical staff that are co-located with Inspace (and therefore best placed to work closely with the contractor) and that of the Housing Responsive Repairs Manager. The team also included a Housing Operations Manager, a post which no longer exists. The ratio of technicians to stock (circa 1:1800) plus one manager is such that it is most unlikely that they will have had sufficient time to develop the relationship in the manner originally envisaged.

Questions 3 and 4: What is the efficacy of the current arrangements and to what extent is the Council and its customers are benefiting from the arrangement?

- 3.11 The contractor is provided with a suitable financial incentive to improve performance but the extent to which this is driven by the client has been questionable. The year to date performance figures for Inspace do not compare favourably with the sector as a whole but there are some signs that this is improving. Performance during December 2008 peaked and both Inspace and the Council's officers are committed to continuing this positive trend.
- 3.12 Eighty eight percent of tenants are satisfied with the service, although this is reported against only one measure (overall satisfaction). Other crucial aspects of the service are not measured or used to identify areas for improvement but it is understood that this issue is currently in the process of being addressed.
- 3.13 Given the two year relationship there is little evidence of innovation within the partnership and in HQN's view an undesirable degree of reliance has historically

been placed on Inspace to produce its own performance information. Again, we understand that this has been the subject of corrective action and validation by the partners.

- 3.14 In our view, until recently, there has not been a step-change in the ability of Inspace to complete repairs on time and there are a number of aspects of a modern maintenance service that are missing from the current service. The operating hours of the service are limited, information technology is not being used to ensure that appointments are systematically offered at the first point of contact for all non-emergency repairs and information on the progress of jobs is not as timely as it could be.
- 3.15 There are signs that the service offered by Inspace is improving but it will in our view require a further 6 months, after the budget is increased to the normal level from April 09, before the Council is in a position to confirm whether the required step change has occurred and is indeed sustainable. It is essential that Inspace develop and submit a timebound recovery plan for approval and this plan is used to monitor and manage performance

Question 5: To what extent do average job and project costs compare favourably or unfavourably within the market place?

- 3.16 At a headline level, repair and void costs are within HQN's cost bandwidths of £60 to £70 and £1,500 to £1,900 respectively but HQN considers this may be a by-product of an underdeveloped service rather than an outcome based on delivering the best possible service with the resources available at the lowest possible cost. There is evidence that the relationship with Inspace has recently delivered a number of cost reductions but there is little evidence that these are a direct result of improved efficiency.

Question 6: Is the 'open book' arrangement capable of delivering cost and service benefits when compared with the alternatives?

- 3.17 The introduction of Open Book as part of the housing repairs service at Hinckley and Bosworth Council problems are not untypical of what HQN has found elsewhere. Unfamiliarity and inexperience are often the links between cause and effect and such difficulties can be addressed with the commitment from both the client and contractor. Despite the problems experienced by the Council, the current arrangement has the potential to deliver the improvements envisaged but there will be a need to address the system, staffing and service delivery issues highlighted above.
- 3.18 In summary, it is HQN's view; the partnering relationship with Inspace has not yet delivered the style and flexibility of service that the Council and its customers have reasonably expected but there is evidence that improvements are starting to materialise. The partnering and open book frameworks devised by the Council and its advisors are perfectly capable of delivering the envisaged outcomes but it has been a combination of inexperienced client staff coupled with the absence of any

real efficiency benefits and rigorous pursuit of cost reductions that is placing the Council in a position where the contractor, is in all probability currently securing payment on a 'cost plus' basis.

4 Recommendations

HQN recommends that:

- 1) The council's clienting team is further developed to ensure they can effectively manage this modern form of procurement contract.
- 2) The audit strategy for the relationship is reviewed.
- 3) Inspace are required to produce a timebound action plan that addresses:
 - a) The limited operating hours of the service.
 - b) The limited number of appointments made.
 - c) The poor integration and over-reliance on sub-contractors for repairs with high volumes and costs (electrical work).
- 4) Samples of performance information are externally validated.
- 5) Urgent steps are taken to accelerate the remedial action required to address the continued under- performance of the contractor in key areas. These include:
 - a. Ensuring that void repairs are completed within timescale.
 - b. The target for keeping appointments is met.

HQN is the largest independent housing training and consultancy company in the UK. Over 680 housing organisations nationwide subscribe to The Housing Quality Network which provides high quality briefings and workshops on a wide range of issues affecting the sector. We also run a number of specialist networks, provide bespoke consultancy and research, in-house training, interim management (The Pool) and executive recruitment (The Source) services and host a comprehensive programme of conferences and seminars.

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SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 12 FEBRUARY 2009

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND PLANNING SERVICES

RE: PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT APPEAL DECISIONS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of the Planning and Enforcement appeal determinations that have been made contrary to the decision of the Local Planning Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The report be noted.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

Since the last report to the Scrutiny Commission in August 2008 there have been 13 appeal decisions made by the Planning Inspectorate. 9 appeals have been dismissed and 2 allowed; with 2 split decisions. In addition, 2 have been withdrawn. **Of those allowed, two were officer recommendations to committee of which members agreed with the officers decision, and two were decisions by members to overturn officer's recommendation.**

4. APPEALS ALLOWED

4.1 Appeal by Mr D Rayne against the refusal of planning permission for an amateur radio mast at 73 Southfield Road, Hinckley. (App No. 08/00109/FUL) (Written Representations).

4.1.1 The application was recommended for approval by officers but Members refused the proposal on the grounds that the development would create a highly visible prominent and discordant feature in the area and would have an overbearing and adverse impact on the amenities of nearby residents.

4.1.2 The Inspector disagreed with the decision and noted that Southfield Road is a busy road with on-street parking, that many of the houses have TV aerials on their chimneys and at the roadside there are trees, lamp standards and telegraph poles with wires radiating out to the houses. Whilst accepting that upper parts of the mast would be visible from parts of the road and from windows and gardens of houses opposite when fully extended; he considered it would soon become an established element of the street scene, which already contained other eye-catching features. In his opinion, the mast with the antennas described, would not go beyond what an amateur radio enthusiast would normally expect to be able to erect in this part of the garden of this detached house. On balance, the proposal was acceptable and within adopted Borough Council Policies.

4.1.3 The appeal was allowed subject to conditions requiring agreement to the antennas to be attached to the mast, a requirement that it should be fully retracted when not in use and that it should be removed entirely within 28 days of its ceasing to be required for radio communication.

- 4.1.4 Cost implications are budgeted staff resources. No external costs.
- 4.2 Appeal by Sycamore Developments against the decision to refuse a planning application for the demolition of a dwelling and erection of 14 apartments with ancillary works at 3 Cleveland Road, Hinckley (App No. 08/00221/FUL) (Informal Hearing).
- 4.2.1 The application was recommended for approval by officers but members refused the proposal because of the unacceptable effect high density development would have on the character and appearance of the area and the implications for on-street parking and highway safety as a result of the limited amount of on-site parking.
- 4.2.2 The Inspector disagreed with the Council's argument and considered that in view of the clear purpose of Government Policy, the density of development in itself was not objectionable and that the principle of apartments should not affect the character of the area, which already exhibited similar developments. These showed a clear and appropriate response to the national policy direction aimed at increasing housing provision in accessible locations. In addition, he considered the height and bulk of the building would not appear overbearing and the proposal successfully responded to its design context and would not be strident or out of place in the street scene.
- 4.2.3 Whilst noting the significant demand for on-street parking along Cleveland Road, the Inspector felt that this was not exceptional for an edge-of-town-centre location where alternative transport choices should exist. The level of car parking proposed for the development of 1 space per unit plus 4 visitor spaces was entirely adequate to serve the scheme without adverse effects on on-street parking or highway safety.
- 4.2.4 Similarly, the Inspector did not consider the concerns expressed by local residents regarding the impact of the scheme on their living conditions were so great as to outweigh the benefits of the development to the supply of housing in the area.
- 4.2.5 The appeal was allowed subject to conditions which include substantial boundary treatments and the use of obscure glazing on side facing windows to protect neighbours amenities. In addition, costs were awarded against the Borough Council on the grounds that the members decision in relation to parking requirements was clearly inconsistent and unjustifiable to an unreasonable degree. Whilst accepting that each planning application must be considered on its own merits, and planning authorities are not bound to adopt the professional or technical advice received from their officers or consultees, the Inspector pointed out that they must show that there were reasonable planning grounds for taking a decision contrary to such advice and produce relevant evidence to support their decision. In this case the Committee was aware that their decision was inconsistent with a decision taken on a nearby comparable site by a Planning Inspector and inconsistent with their own later decision on the same site. The decision was therefore not justifiable, was in the view of the Inspector, perverse and amounted to unreasonable behaviour. **The appellant had been put to unnecessary expense and a partial award of costs was justified.**

4.2.6 Cost implications are budgeted staff resources although negotiations are continuing with the appellant with regard to the award of partial costs.

5. **SPLIT DECISIONS**

5.1 Appeals by Mr G Vero against three enforcement notices at Orchard Farm, Hinckley Road, Cadeby were heard at a Public Inquiry in June 2008.

5.1.1 The notices related to the unauthorised commercial use of agricultural buildings and land as well as associated operational development. Two of the appeals were dismissed and the enforcement notices upheld whereas the third succeeded in part and permission was granted for the use of one of the buildings on the site for the repair and refurbishment of heavy goods commercial trucks and trailers subject to personal inclusive use of the appellant, limitation on hours and numbers of vehicles as well as restrictions to the use of the building only. The remainder of the third appeal was dismissed.

5.1.2 As a whole, the Inspector agreed with the Borough Council in that apart from the one building, the use of the remainder of the site represented a non-agricultural activity which does not help sustain or contribute to the viability of the farm and the use and associated developments do not form part of a well conceived farm diversification scheme. Whilst the buildings were not unduly prominent within the farming landscape the use of the land overall for goods vehicles has led to a harmful encroachment of development into the countryside and this harm outweighs any benefits to the local economy.

5.1.3 Cost implications are budgeted staff resources. No external costs.

5.2 Appeal by Mr R Knowles against the refusal of planning permission to retain a balcony, metal flues and windows at Haywain Barn, Insleys Lane, Shackerstone (App No. 07/00386/FUL) (Written Representations).

5.2.1 Members endorsed the recommendations by officers at Committee and the planning application was refused on the grounds that the alterations to this barn were unsympathetic, incongruous and out of keeping with its former agricultural design and character.

5.2.2 The Inspector agreed with the Borough Council that the balcony represented a discordant element which was harmful to the character of the original building and failed to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. However, in respect of the flue and windows, the Inspector considered that neither had an effect on appearance or amenity and there would be no conflict with adopted policies which sought to protect the living conditions of neighbours and ensure a high standard of design particularly in the reuse of rural buildings.

5.2.3 Cost implications are budgeted staff resources. No external costs.

6.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (AB)

- 6.1 The award of costs for the appeal at 3 Cleveland Road has been built into the 2008/09 revenue budget. All the other costs for the appeals listed were met using existing staffing resources.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

8. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Council needs to manage its performance through its Performance Management Framework in relation to appeals.

9. CONSULTATION

None.

10. RISK IMPLICATIONS

It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision/project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

The following significant risks associated with this report/decision were identified from this assessment:

Management of Significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating Actions	Owner
Financial implications to the Authority in defending appeals	Take into account the risk in refusing and the likely success of an appeal	T. Darke

11. RURAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

12. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

None.

Background Papers: Application files and appeal documentation

Contact Officer: Tracy Darke, Development Services and Policy Manager, ext 5692

REPORT OF HEAD OF CORPORATE AND SCRUTINY SERVICES
RE: ANTI POVERTY STRATEGY – FINAL REPORT – CI RESEARCH

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the final report prepared by CI research to members of the work commissioned on behalf of the Commission to inform and scope an anti poverty strategy for Hinckley and Bosworth.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Scrutiny Commission

- (1) Notes and endorses the work undertaken to date and makes comment on the Final Report
- (2) Notes the future planned actions.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 3.1 The need for a review into income deprivation within the borough of Hinckley and Bosworth was identified in 2006/7 by the Scrutiny Commission. A decision was therefore made to include it in the Commission's work programme.
- 3.2 The Commission's objective for the review was to improve the quality of life of people living in poverty in the area. This remains a primary concern heightened by the current economic downturn.
- 3.8 The Scrutiny Commission established a working group to take forward the conclusions of previous studies to develop local strategies and policies to address income deprivation in the Borough.
- 3.9 It was agreed that Scrutiny would commission a further review to scope an anti poverty strategy, bringing areas of best practice to the table which could then be informed by initiatives and actions currently being addressed in the Borough by all agencies and identifying where these could be more joined up to offer even more support.
- 3.10 CI Research has offered a comprehensive review of current strategies, looking at who should be involved in the process, how strategies are developed, particularly in terms of consultation and allocation of responsibilities and more particularly the focus and format of anti poverty strategies. The report has been received and is attached.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

None

7. **CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

This report and review contributes directly to the Corporate Aim of a thriving economy and to the corporate value of providing support to those who need it most.

8. **CONSULTATION**

Stakeholders across voluntary sector, faith communities and key agencies.

8. **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Failing to challenge and offer recommendations leading to the community not recognising the importance of the Scrutiny Commissions opportunity to develop policy	Finalise report Offer Recommendations Publicise the report and successes	L Horton

9. **RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

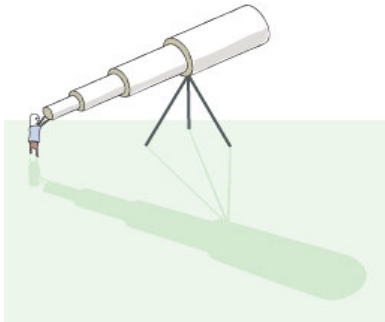
The review is of poverty and income deprivation for the whole community of Hinckley and Bosworth. The strategy will address rural and urban parts of the authority.

10. **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

None

Background papers: Scrutiny Commission papers and reports associated with Income Deprivation April 2007 and February 2008.

Contact Officer: Louisa Horton x 5859



Final Report for:



**A Framework for Developing an Anti-Poverty Strategy: Final Report
(Discussion Draft)**

22 December 2008

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Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Report Structure	2
2	WHICH ORGANISATIONS ARE INVOLVED?	3
2.1	Introduction.....	3
2.2	Partnership Board	3
2.3	Key Stakeholder Group.....	3
2.4	Additional Stakeholders	4
3	STRATEGY FOCUS.....	5
3.1	Key Themes and Actions.....	5
3.2	Key Performance Indicators Used To Measure Impact	12
4	WRITING THE STRATEGY: A PROPOSED STRUCTURE	14
4.1	Introduction.....	14
4.2	Suggested Outline Strategy Structure	14
5	FRAMEWORK RECOMMENDATION	17
5.1	Model of Best Practice	17
5.2	Bringing Together the Key Stakeholder Group.....	19
5.3	Background and Evidence	20
5.4	Review of Current Services	25
5.5	Report Findings and Draft Strategy.....	25
5.6	Publish Strategy and Assign Monitoring Responsibility	26
	Appendix One: Bibliography	28



1 INTRODUCTION

This document provides the final report to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) Scrutiny Commission of a study undertaken by Ci Research, commissioned to review existing Anti-Poverty Strategies. The overall objective of the study was to inform the production of a borough wide Anti Poverty strategy, through the principle identification of:

- Which organisations were involved in the strategy setting process;
- The process gone through to develop an anti-poverty strategy;
- The areas of common focus in the strategies; and
- What a final strategy should look like in terms of the information it contains.

In the main, documents reviewed were chosen from comparable areas to of Hinckley and Bosworth. The strategies we considered in this respect were:

- Social Inclusion / Anti-Poverty Strategy for Bedford Borough (2006)
- Chester-le-Street District Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy (2007)
- Kerrier Anti-Poverty Strategy;
- Anti-Poverty Strategy for Nuneaton and Bedworth 2005 – 2011;
- West Devon Borough Council Anti-Poverty Strategy (2003);

In addition Ci also reviewed a number of strategies from urban areas as well as national policy to provide additional insight. Consideration of anti-poverty urban strategies was driven by the recognition that they were not reliant on special initiatives funds or “funny money”. These included:

- Metropolitan Borough of Wirral Anti-Poverty Strategy (2004);
- Sandwell Anti-Poverty Strategy (1998);
- Dundee City Council Anti-Poverty Strategy;
- Haringey Child Poverty Strategy 2008 – 2011;
- Ending Child Poverty (Thinking 2020) – Department for Work and Pensions (2008);
- Participation in Anti-Poverty and Regeneration Work and Research – Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2005);
- Southwark Anti-Poverty Statement 2003 – 2006;
- Work for Children – Department for Work and Pensions (2007).

1.1 Report Structure

Following this brief introductory section the remainder of this report is presented in a structure that broadly conforms to the following:

SECTION 2: Details the findings and conclusions that can be drawn from our review of good practice in terms of:

- Who should take the lead in setting direction for any Anti-Poverty strategy;
- Which organisations, stakeholders and groups should be involved in an active role (delivery or otherwise) and who should be consulted on the direction and purpose of the strategy.

SECTION 3: Provides a narrative on our findings of the areas of commonality in Anti-Poverty strategies considered within this study as well as providing practical examples of initiatives contained within the extant literature.

In addition, we also provide examples of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to allow HBBC and its key stakeholders to give consideration to methods of measuring and monitoring the effectiveness of the interventions sponsored under their own anti-poverty actions.

SECTION 4: Provides a review of how the structure of an Anti-Poverty strategy should look, based on those already published.

SECTION 5: The concluding section of our report provides a model of best practice that will take HBBC through from initial plans to a final Anti-Poverty strategy.

Appendices: Provided as a separate appendix to this main report is a bibliography which details the Anti Poverty Strategies we considered in completing this study.

2 WHICH ORGANISATIONS ARE INVOLVED?

2.1 Introduction

The organisations and agencies involved in an Anti-Poverty Strategy will depend, to some extent, on the existing relationships within each area – in other words they fit to local circumstances. While it is important to be as inclusive as possible throughout the whole process to ensure buy-in from people and agencies, it is also important to be realistic in terms of people's availability and time constraints.

It is also important to recognise that an exhaustive list of partners could make the strategy logistically difficult. Clearly, it is vitally important that some agencies are involved in the process; in some instances it is more important to ensure there certain specialisms (specifically the partners who deliver them) are included.

In recognition of these “position” statements the purpose of this section is to detail what existing strategies indicate as being best practice in terms of involving organisations and the extent of this involvement.

2.2 Partnership Board

The partnership board take lead responsibility for the production of the Anti-Poverty Strategy. The size of the board varied depending on the size and scale of the strategies reviewed, though it was consistent that the Local Authority, County / Borough Council or Local Strategic Partnership made up the board.

2.3 Key Stakeholder Group

As detailed above, it is important to be selective when pulling together the key stakeholder group who will have a key role to play in the direction taken in the strategy. It is likely to be a fine balancing act between being inclusive without being unwieldy, with the added potential to lose possible partners should they not be included in this group.

A good example from existing strategies was in Bedford¹, where the ‘Including Everyone Theme Group’ was developed and proved effective. We recommend that HBBC follows Bedford's lead in ensuring the Key Stakeholder Group includes representatives from:

- The Borough Council;

¹ <http://www.bedford.gov.uk/Default.aspx/Web/AntiPovertyStrategy>

- Police;
- PCT;
- Relevant Housing Association;
- Relevant Race Equality Organisation / Agency;
- Child Poverty Action Group (should one exist);
- Local Council for Voluntary Services;
- Relevant Faith Agency;
- Relevant Employment Agency;
- Relevant Rural Communities Charity;
- Diversity Network.

The Including Everyone Theme Group was established at the beginning of the process in order to steer and develop the strategy. The group was created as part of the Borough's 'Including everyone' theme, which was the ninth theme of the community plan for the Borough and reflected a desire for a wide and diverse network of stakeholders and community members to be consulted on issues that were of critical importance to local residence. The decision to form this key stakeholder group was taken at the Local Strategic Partnership Annual Assembly.

Group meetings should happen on at least a quarterly basis and their role will be to drive forward the production of the strategy and to make recommendations for interventions. This group should report back to the Partnership Board, who will then use their input to make informed decisions regarding the strategy.

2.4 Additional Stakeholders

By its nature the Key Stakeholder Group (under whatever guise it is developed) will be relatively limited. It will be extremely important to ensure that all other potential partners and organisations / agencies with a vested interest should be allowed a voice. Again these additional stakeholders will vary between geographies, but should without doubt provide a platform for resident's to give their own unique opinions and feedback.

We therefore recommend that in addition to the agencies and organisations consulted with during the preparation of the Hinckley and Bosworth Anti-Poverty Strategy, HBBC also consult a number of residents and consider having a resident representative on the key stakeholder group.

3 STRATEGY FOCUS

A point re-iterated numerous times during this review of existing Anti-Poverty Strategies is that each individual strategy is fundamentally shaped by the issues particular to the geography. However, during our review it was evident that there were a number of relevant issues and themes being addressed, with the actions being undertaken in other areas of potential use to HBBC.

3.1 Key Themes and Actions

Analysis of a range of anti-poverty strategies has revealed the following re-occurring areas that form the basis of much of the strategies' focus:

- Income deprivation;
- Employment;
- Health deprivation and disability;
- Education, skills and training;
- Living environment;
- Housing and services; and
- Crime and anti-social behaviour.

Considered below in turn we provide representative examples of work and initiatives resulting from our review literature review against each of these thematic areas.

3.1.1 Income Deprivation

There is a common recognition that issues surrounding low incomes, financial difficulties and lack of suitable access to financial services & advice are major causes of deprivation. Specific areas of consideration related to income deprivation found within existing strategies include:

- Reducing the percentage of families with low household incomes;
- Ensuring fairer advice related to debt management; and
- Making financial advice more readily available.

Specific actions to tackle this area of deprivation within existing anti-poverty strategies include:

- Establishment of an integrated debt counselling service within the council to help people who are experiencing financial difficulties to better manage their affairs and thus improve their quality of life while seeking to reduce financial exclusion (Nuneaton and Bedworth, 2005)

“Citizens Advice Bureau will come in and see three appointments per week in order to help tenants experiencing financial difficulties as well as members of the public calling in for advice. E.g. can be used to prevent actions such as homelessness or committal in regards to council tax.”²

- Increasing people’s take up of benefits (Bedford, 2006; Chester Le Street, 2007)

“Benefits take up campaign.”³

“Develop and implement a benefits take up strategy to tackle disadvantaged customers through active support and proactive intervention.”⁴

- Increase financial literacy to help reduce financial exclusion (Wirral, 2004)

“Increase access to basic banking services through working with commercial banks and support the development and increase membership of local credit unions.”⁵

Key agencies involved in actions around income deprivation are:

- Local Authority;
- Credit Unions; and
- Commercial banks

² Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (2005): *Tackling Poverty Together: Anti-Poverty for Nuneaton and Bedworth 2005/2011*, p.9.

³ Bedford partnership Board (2006), *Social Inclusion/Anti-Poverty Strategy for Bedford Borough*, p.25

⁴ Chester-le-Street District Council (2007), *Anti-Poverty Strategy*, p.17.

⁵ Metropolitan Borough of Wirral (2004), *Anti-Poverty Strategy*, p.6.

3.1.2 Employment

A key area found within many existing anti-poverty strategies is the focus placed upon getting people into work, increasing the amount of jobs available to local people and increasing the opportunities for people to start their own business. Specific actions to tackle this area of deprivation within existing anti-poverty strategies include:

- Encouraging social enterprise and business start ups (Nuneaton and Bedworth, 2005)

“Feasibility studies. Partnership working and provision of incubator units where feasible.”⁶

- Creating employment opportunities (Wirral, 2004)

“Create better work opportunities for disabled people and those disadvantaged in the labour market through the encouragement of mentoring to employment scheme and social enterprises.”⁷

- Promoting and supporting the work of small to medium sized enterprises (Chester Le Street, 2007)

“Increase opportunities available for small and medium sized enterprises to access opportunities to provide goods and services to the Council, contributing to economic growth in the District.”⁸

Key agencies involved in actions around employment are:

- Job Centre Plus;
- Local Authority Social Enterprise Strategy Group.

3.1.3 Health Deprivation and Disability

Across most of the reviewed Anti-Poverty Strategies there can be found an area of focus relating to issues surrounding health deprivation, designed to promote equity between the most deprived and affluent areas within a locality. Much of the work in this area encompasses partnership working between

⁶ Nuneaton and Bedworth (2005), p.12

⁷ Metropolitan Borough of Wirral (2004), *Anti-Poverty Strategy*, p.5.

⁸ Chester-le-Street District Council (2007), *Anti-Poverty Strategy*, p.17.

Health Trusts, Primary Care Trusts and other relevant agencies in order to tackle issues such as smoking, healthy eating, teenage pregnancy, drug and alcohol misuse and home safety checks. Specific actions to tackle this area of deprivation within existing anti-poverty strategies include:

- Establishing effective partnerships for the relief of poverty (Wirral, 2004)

“Work with Health Authority partners to even out health inequalities, early mortality, etc.”⁹

- Reducing the number of teenage pregnancies (Nuneaton and Bedworth, 2005)

“By establishing a range of opportunities designed to engage young women and girls in sport.”¹⁰

- Introducing and/or maintaining a pricing strategy that allows access to leisure and sporting facilities at an affordable price (Chester Le Street, 2007)

“This will be carried out by comparing prices with other local authorities using local networks and contacts, consultation through leisure services surveys with specific questions on pricing and affordability.”¹¹

Key agencies involved in actions around health deprivation and disability are:

- SureStart;
- Healthy Living Centre;
- Health Improvement Partnership;
- PCT;
- NHS Trust.

3.1.4 Education, Skills and Training

This is another consistent area of focus within existing Anti-Poverty Strategies, with the over-riding goal of promoting and sustaining a learning culture across all age groups. Key sub-areas within this area of focus include providing lifelong access to learning, helping to raise skills levels amongst the most socially

⁹ Metropolitan Borough of Wirral (2004), *Anti-Poverty Strategy*, p.7.

¹⁰ Nuneaton and Bedworth (2005), p.16.

¹¹ Chester-le-Street District Council (2007), *Anti-Poverty Strategy*, p.18.

excluded and developing sufficient childcare facilities to make it possible for adults to learn. Specific actions to tackle this area of deprivation within existing Anti-Poverty Strategies include:

- Making information, advice and guidance more readily accessible (Nuneaton and Bedworth, 2007)

“To produce a new accessible information directory, including an on-line directory.”¹²

- Establishing new learning centres (Kerrier, 2003)
- Extending access to ITC learning and experience for all ages (Kerrier, 2003)
- Increasing opportunities for training (Kerrier, 2003)

“Working predominantly with the local TEC¹³ and the Jobcentres to devise training schemes which will provide the skills needed by local businesses and help the unskilled and disadvantaged find employment.”¹⁴

Key agencies involved in actions around education, skills and training are:

- Job Centre Plus ;
- Local Education Establishments;
- LSC.

3.1.5 Housing and Services

Most Anti-Poverty Strategies contain objectives relating to access to housing and related services, typically with other agencies such as housing associations involved. Areas of focus within housing reflect the desire of Local Authorities to ensure that everybody has the opportunity to live in a decent home, improve equality of access to social housing and to increase the supply of affordable housing for local people. Specific actions to tackle this area of deprivation within existing anti-poverty strategies include:

- Developing a rent-deposit scheme (Nuneaton and Bedworth, 2005)

¹² Nuneaton and Bedworth (2005), p.14.

¹³ Training and Enterprise Council – superseded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

¹⁴ Kerrier District Council (2003), Draft *Anti-Poverty Strategy*, p.6

“The aim is to help people access the private rent market who otherwise would be homeless. We are also linking in all participants with Credit Unions in order for them to be able to save their own bond.”¹⁵

- Work with Registered Social Landlord’s to maximise the regeneration of the District and contribute to the Decent Homes Standard (Chester Le Street, 2007)

“To work with existing and future RSLs to identify protocols, Service Level Agreements, and partnership agreements as appropriate.”¹⁶

Key agencies involved in actions around housing and services are:

- Housing Associations;
- Local Authority;
- Credit Unions;
- Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

3.1.6 Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

This is an important theme that impacts upon the quality of life and happiness of everyone but has particular implications for those individuals who face the barriers of social and financial exclusion. Initiatives currently forming part of existing strategies include multi-agency approaches to tackling anti-social behaviour, encouraging neighbourhood watch initiatives and improving the look of streets in terms of cleaning up litter, reducing graffiti and refurbishing bus shelters. Specific actions to tackle this area of deprivation within existing Anti-Poverty Strategies include:

- Reducing crime and disorder within the locality (Chester Le Street, 2007)

“Work with partners to implement and deliver a crime and disorder reduction strategy and establish a community safety initiative along regeneration corridors according to locally identified issues.”¹⁷

¹⁵ Nuneaton and Bedworth (2005), p.13.

¹⁶ Chester-le-Street District Council (2007), *Anti-Poverty Strategy*, p.19.

¹⁷ Chester-le-Street District Council (2007), *Anti-Poverty Strategy*, p.20.

- Reducing anti-social behaviour and nuisance incidents involving young people through engaging young people from target wards in diversionary activities such as sport (Nuneaton and Bedworth, 2005)

“To fully develop the Active Sports Programme across the borough and to provide a range of holiday play schemes.”¹⁸

Key agencies involved in actions around housing and services are:

- Council;
- Police;
- Leisure / Sports Partnerships;
- Leisure Trust

3.1.7 Living Environment

This is an important theme within existing anti-poverty literature. It reflects a view that the local physical and natural environments should be sustained and protected and that good environmental practice should be promoted. Initiatives within this area have included education and awareness programmes on energy efficiency, engaging local community groups in tackling environmental dereliction and encouraging the reclamation and use of brown field buildings and land. Specific actions to tackle this area of deprivation within existing anti-poverty strategies include:

- Working towards making safer streets for local residents (Nuneaton and Bedworth, 2005; Wirral, 2004)

“Community deciding on environmental projects for their area. Based in five wards across the Borough.”¹⁹

“Alley-gating.”²⁰

- Improving the living environment of those living in poverty

¹⁸ Nuneaton and Bedworth (2005), p.18.

¹⁹ Nuneaton and Bedworth (2005), p.21.

²⁰ Metropolitan Borough of Wirral (2004), *Anti-Poverty Strategy*, p.6.

3.2 Key Performance Indicators Used To Measure Impact

It is particularly important for HBBC to consider the ways in which they measure and monitor the work they are undertaking in order to build a solid evidence base for future developments and potential funding. These scope and nature of such measures can be particularly wide ranging; however, we recommend that HBBC use one overarching measure, supported by other KPIs specific to theme.

Our recommendation is that HBBC should measure at the household level. To accomplish this we believe that monitoring the number of households in the borough under the poverty threshold²¹ would provide most insight.

The following matrix provides HBBC with suggested Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which could potentially be used to help measure the impact of their interventions in addition to the 'poverty threshold'. These are a mixture of both statistical measures and measures specific to interventions. It will be important for HBBC to consider which of these, or other measures, will be most effective in measuring and monitoring the effects of the strategy²².

Focus Area	Potential Key Performance Indicators
Income Deprivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indices of Multiple Deprivation (Income Score); ▪ Income Support (e.g. Working Tax Credits); ▪ Retail Price Index vs. Annual Wage Survey; ▪ Availability of financial advice ▪ Benefit recipient statistics (NOMIS)
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indices of Multiple Deprivation (Employment Score); ▪ Economic Inactivity Statistics (NOMIS); ▪ Sustained employment (length of time new employees stay in employment); ▪ Numbers assisted into employment
Health Deprivation and Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indices of Multiple Deprivation (Health and Disability Score); ▪ Conceptions among girls aged between 15 and 17
Education, Skills and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indices of Multiple Deprivation (Education, Skills and Training Score); ▪ Number of learning places made available; ▪ OFSTED inspections; ▪ Number of people engaged in learning activities
Housing and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indices of Multiple Deprivation (Barriers to Housing and Services Score); ▪ Number of unfit homes per 1000 dwellings ▪ Affordable housing (house prices/affordability ratio)
Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indices of Multiple Deprivation (Crime Score); ▪ Number of crimes reported;

²¹ The poverty threshold is 60% or less of the median British Household Income. Based on 2006/07 data this ranges from £112 per week for a single adult with no dependant children to £270 per week for two adults with two dependant children.

²² All KPI's are subject to variances in Government.

Focus Area	Potential Key Performance Indicators
Living Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Number of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders issued▪ Indices of Multiple Deprivation (Living Environment Score);▪ Local proxy measures – including household surveys.

We recommend that these and other monitoring and benchmarking take place in the following ways to ensure the strategy is being implemented successfully:

- 6 monthly monitoring reports on the audit/mapping of service provision
- Equality Impact Assessments with built in equality and diversity monitoring
- Key stakeholder group meeting on a quarterly basis and reporting progress on an ongoing basis to the Partnership Board

4 WRITING THE STRATEGY: A PROPOSED STRUCTURE

4.1 Introduction

This section of the report seeks to meet one of the practical objectives of our review, namely to help HBBC to develop a structure for a locally relevant Anti-Poverty Strategy to address the issues within the borough. We therefore outline the common key sections and headings found in the existing strategies reviewed that we feel necessary to produce a full and clear strategy.

4.2 Suggested Outline Strategy Structure

Based on the common areas found in the strategies considered in our study we recommend the following structure:

- **Section 1: Foreword**

A number of strategies we reviewed included a strategy from a member of the Council or other relevant organisation. While perhaps having little practical input into the strategy, such a section helps to place the strategy within a particular time and a particular situation. This 'endorsement' can also be vital in giving the strategy additional significance.

- **Section 2: Introduction**

In broad terms it is important to illustrate the reasons why the strategy has been produced, and in particular what the broad aims of objectives of the strategy are.

- **Section 3: Definitions**

Strategies can often be unclear and directionless due, in part, to nebulous and vague terminology. It is important to make overt what certain terms being referred to mean; for example, social exclusion, social inclusion and poverty.

Poverty is a particularly good example of a 'vague' term that would be repeated numerous times during such a strategy. How this is being defined by HBBC is critical in making the strategy clear.

- **Section 4: Background**

Providing a base line of the current situation is critical in helping users of the strategy to understand where things currently stand in the area. This also provides the rationale for decisions made in the strategy itself. It is important to include the following:

- Current standings on relevant Key Performance Indicators identified in section 4 of this review;
- Previous research work conducted by locally and nationally – for example the Income Deprivation Study conducted by Ci-Research. In addition, it would be useful to cover the drivers of poverty both locally and nationally.
- Outcome of consultation undertaken in preparation for the strategy.

- **Section 5: Target Groups**

Each area has its own set of unique characteristics that may shift focus between different sub-groups. HBBC have identified small pockets of deprivation within small geographies that are the main focus of the Anti-Poverty Strategy and this needs to be made clear along with a rationale for this decision. If there are other groups (such as single parents, disabled etc) then these also need to be identified.

Identifying such target groups will help to keep the Strategy focussed on its primary aims.

- **Section 6: Gap Analysis**

Before planning for the actual delivery of the Anti-Planning Strategy it will be important for HBBC to demonstrate that they have considered the services and facilities currently available for use, how they are being used and the extent to which they meet current need. It will be in the gaps identified during this process where delivery will be placed, and therefore, where the strategy can be most effective.

The background work done before the actual writing of the strategy will detail the needs identified in the borough, while additional work will need to be done to compare this with current provision of services and facilities. This section of the strategy will detail these findings and show that all current possibilities have been considered.

- **Section 7: Delivery**

Bearing in mind the findings from background work, consultation and gap analysis, this section of the strategy actually details the 'nuts and bolts'. In this section should be details of what different strategies and plans are being made (whether involving using / adapting current services and provision or provide additional), who will be involved in the process, and who the target groups are. Also to include are considerations of cost, planning and joint working.

- **Section 8: Monitoring**

Just as important as the plans and strategy itself are details about how this will be monitored to measure progress and success. What key performance indicators will be used to measure this?
Who will be responsible for doing so?

- **Section 9: Planning Matrix**

This section can put the whole strategy into perspective and should detail the timescales involved for each aspect of the strategy. What is to be done over a relatively short timeframe and what will take place over a number of years? The added benefit of this level of detail will be in helping provide focus for HBBC and its partners at the outset and to ensure that any momentum gained during the writing of the strategy is not lost soon after.

5 FRAMEWORK RECOMMENDATION

One of the main objectives of the review was to highlight best practice for HBBC in terms of the process used to produce an effective and inclusive Anti-Poverty Strategy. In the cases we reviewed it was evident that these processes varied by geography, perhaps as a reflection of resources and time availabilities and the amount of work already done in the build up to the strategy. Having said this, Ci have identified a model we see as 'best practice', while recognising that the extent to which it is followed will be affected by the same limitations mentioned above.

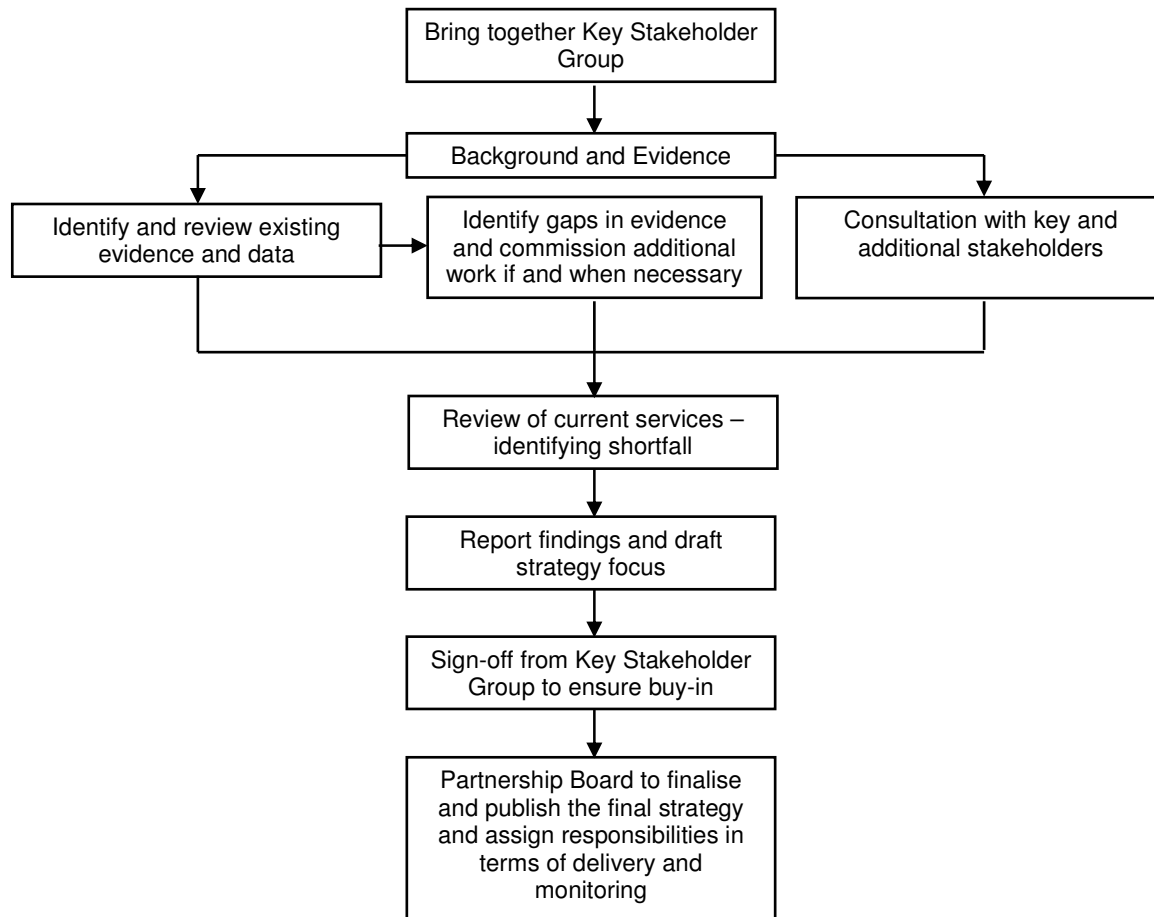
5.1 Model of Best Practice

All of the strategies reviewed had their individual strengths and weaknesses and it is important to note that each area had their own limitations in terms of what they could accomplish in terms of creating a thorough and effective process to produce the most effective strategy possible. Similarly, HBBC will also have limitations as to what can be accomplished, and so the model given below is based on a 'best scenario'.

While certain aspects of the model may be undertaken more thoroughly than others it will be most important to ensure that the process involves:

- As thorough an understanding of the **issues** of the geography and the **evidence base** as possible;
- **Consultation with Key Stakeholders and residents** as a minimum; and
- Consideration of how well **existing service provision** fits the need.

The key stages in the model are shown diagrammatically on the following page.



One of key questions raised from this model is **how does HBBC get a robust evidence base?** We recommend that HBBC spend the necessary time and resource reviewing and publishing all existing evidence (for example, the Income Deprivation Study conducted by Ci on behalf of HBBC in 2007/08) and consultation. This will prove to relevant stakeholders and potential funders that the work being undertaken is well informed.

We also recommend that HBBC decide on relevant KPIs to measure and monitor consistently during the lifetime of the strategy and provide a baseline of these statistics to use as a benchmark for future reference. For our recommended KPIs please refer to Section 3.2 of this report.

Set out in the following subsections we consider in turn the individual steps in turn.

5.2 Bringing Together the Key Stakeholder Group

The first step in the process in producing a fit for purpose Anti-Poverty Strategy is to ensure that a number of key stakeholders are engaged from the outset to form a Key Stakeholder Group. This group bring together a number of key specialism's needed to cover all aspects of dealing with poverty and can help HBBC make informed decisions about the direction the strategy should take.

The review of good practice in terms of existing Anti-Poverty Strategies provided a skeleton of who should be involved in this group. In addition, we are also aware of a number of organisations already involved with HBBC who we suggest become part of this Stakeholder Group. The table below shows the suggested skeleton group from the review of good practice, along with the extent to which the organisations involved begin to flesh this group out²³.

Organisation/Focus	Currently Involved?	Name of Organisation
Borough / County Council	Yes	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Police	No	
PCT	Yes	Leicester and Rutland PCT
Housing Association	No	
Race Equality	No	
Child	Yes	SureStart
CVS	Yes	Voluntary Action
Faith	Yes	Faith Community
Employment	Yes	Job Centre Plus
Rural	No	
Diversity	No	
Education	Yes	North Warwickshire and Hinckley College (FE)

It will be the responsibility of HBBC as the lead organisation, along with the existing members of the Key Stakeholder Group to decide the extent to which further agencies are engaged to become part of this group. These decisions will depend on circumstances, existing relationships and resources particular to Hinckley and Bosworth.

²³ In addition, CAB is also currently engaged in the process in Hinckley and Bosworth. While not falling directly under any of the focus areas suggested in the Skeleton Group, they will be a valuable addition to the Key Stakeholder Group.

5.3 Background and Evidence

As identified during the review of existing Anti-Poverty Strategies, providing a baseline of the current situation is critical in helping users of the strategy to understand where things currently stand in the area. This also provides the rationale for decisions made in the strategy itself and can be used as evidence when seeking support and funding. With regards to consultation with key stakeholders, additional stakeholders and residents, this also gives them a sense of inclusion and increases the likelihood of them being on board with the strategy and willing to assist in the future.

We identified three key activities that HBBC could undertake to ensure their evidence base is suitably robust. These were:

- Consultation with both residents and (additional) stakeholders;
- Current KPI standings; and
- Literature review.

There are numerous ways and degrees in depth as to how these tasks can be undertaken, as shown below.

Consultation with Stakeholders	
HBBC to consult with key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face meetings with HBBC; • Groups sessions; • Independent / external consultation face to face or over the telephone – anonymity and honesty; • Invited to submit a written response to a number of key questions and prompts • Thematic focus groups.
HBBC to consult with additional stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face meetings with HBBC; • Groups sessions; • Thematic focus groups. • Invited to Stakeholder meeting; • Independent / external consultation face to face or over the telephone.
External consultation with key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face meetings; • Groups sessions; • Thematic focus groups.

External consultation with additional stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face meetings; • Groups sessions; • Thematic focus groups.
Resident Consultation	
HBBC to consult with a representative sample of residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Stakeholder Group agent to speak to a representative group of residents.
External consultation with a representative sample of residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online surveys • Postal/telephone survey
Developing a group of residents to work alongside the Key Stakeholder Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A panel of local residents experienced in the issues of income deprivation – developing an expert informant group
<p>Note: How can the consultation process and products be used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researching: Where information is needed to help make a decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering information on opinions, attitudes and priorities in order to inform decision making. • Consulting: Where views will be taken into consideration when making a decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining views on proposals or initiatives and taking them into account when decisions are made. • Involving: Where ideas are asked for and involvement in making a decision is encouraged: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To seek out suggestions and new ideas, asking the community to participate in the decision making process. • Partnership: Where a decision is being taken in conjunction with others: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate joint working and decision-making with the local community and other stakeholders. 	
Current KPI Standings	
Basic Poverty Threshold measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household income data
Added value KPI measurements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBC
<p>Note: Key Performance Indicators are an essential tool for being able to effectively measure how successfully the anti-poverty strategy is being implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate KPIs to be informed by data analysis exercise within evidence base; • Examples of KPIs can be found in the anti-poverty discussion paper and will typically be reliable data sources that can easily reveal if a certain area of focus or implementation is having a measurable effect. 	

KPIs form part of the on-going evidence base for the strategy and should be reported on at quarterly or six-monthly intervals as part of an evidence-led, on-going impact assessment.

Literature Review

Internal or external review of research exploring what drives poverty – in Hinckley and Bosworth Borough and similar areas in particular.

- A literature review should form a central component of the evidence base:
 - This could be conducted internally by Hinckley and Bosworth staff or externally through an appropriate consultant/organisation.
- Three separate strands could form the basis of the review:
 - A review of the drivers of poverty and successful interventions;
 - A review of existing anti-poverty strategies;
 - A data analysis exercise of relevant data/information sources relating to the specific areas of focus within the strategy. These data sources would then form KPIs allowing progress and impact to be measured.

Within this the term '**Social Capital**' as an important concept in the element of the process involved with community and resident engagement. The principle of Social Capital describes the pattern and intensity of networks among people and the shared values which arise from those networks. Greater interaction between people generates a greater sense of community spirit.

Definitions of social capital vary, but the main aspects include citizenship, 'neighbourliness', social networks and civic participation. The definition used by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), is

"... Networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups..."²⁴

Research has shown that higher levels of social capital are associated with better health, higher educational achievement, better employment outcomes, and lower crime rates. In other words, those with extensive networks are more likely to be

"Housed, healthy, hired and happy..."²⁵

²⁴ Cote S, Healy T (2001) "The Well Being of nations. The role of human and social capital." Organisation for economic Co-operation and Development, Paris

All of these areas are of concern to both policy-makers and community members alike.

There are a number of different aspects to social capital and measuring the level of social capital in communities can be complex. In many surveys respondents are asked a range of questions that cover a variety of issues. They commonly focus on:

- Levels of trust - for example, whether individuals trust their neighbours and whether they consider their neighbourhood a place where people help each other.
- Membership - for example, to how many clubs, societies or social groups individuals belong.
- Networks and how much social contact individuals have in their lives - for example, how often individuals see family and friends

Formal and informal networks are central to the concept of social capital. They are defined as the personal relationships which are accumulated when people interact with each other in families, workplaces, neighbourhoods, local associations and a range of informal and formal meeting places.”²⁶

Different types of social capital can be described in terms of different types of networks:

- **Bonding social capital:** describes closer connections between people and is characterised by strong bonds e.g. among family members or among members of the same ethnic group; it is good for ‘getting by’ in life.
- **Bridging social capital:** describes more distant connections between people and is characterised by weaker, but more cross-cutting ties e.g. with business associates, acquaintances, friends from different ethnic groups, friends of friends, etc; it is good for ‘getting ahead’ in life.
- **Linking social capital:** describes connections with people in positions of power and is characterised by relations between those within a hierarchy where there are differing levels of power; it is good for accessing support from formal institutions. It is different from bonding and bridging in that it is concerned with relations between people who are not on an equal footing. An example would be a social service agency dealing with an individual e.g. job searching at Jobcentre Plus.

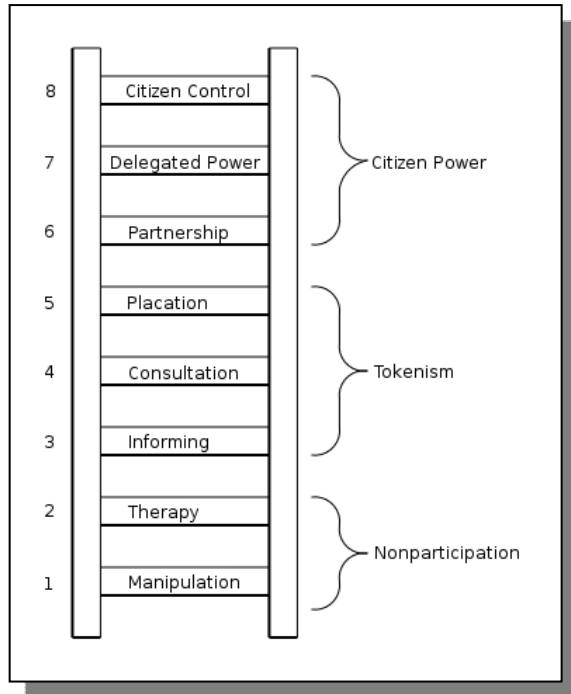
One useful model HBBC may wish to consider as a measure of the extent to which local residents are involved in the process is Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation. This model - first introduced in a

²⁵ Woolcock, M (2001) “The place of social capital in Understanding Social and Economic Outcomes.” ISUMA Canadian Journal of Policy Research 2 (10) 11-17.

²⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2000) “Measuring Social Capital: current collections and future directions.”

paper in 1969²⁷ - suggests that there are three broad categories of engagement: citizen power, tokenism and non-participation, and eight rungs of a ladder ranging from 'manipulation' at the bottom rung to 'citizen control' at the top. The model is illustrated in Figure 5.1, below. The assumption behind the ladder metaphor as used by Arnstein is that community participation is essentially a struggle for power, with the authorities and communities ceding it and taking it by turns. As a linear model, there is also assumed to be a progression as a community moves up the ladder, from 'bad' to 'good'.

Figure 5.1: Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation



Some forty years later, the Arnstein model is still widely employed at the core of many approaches to participation, which itself has been increasingly central in a policy context.²⁸ More recently, the pre-eminence of this model has been challenged for a number of reasons:

- That communities necessarily aspire to the top of the ladder ('citizen control') when in fact they may be happy with a much lower level of participation;
- That there is no allowance for the different levels of participation that may be appropriate for different areas of policy;

²⁷ Arnstein, S R 'Ladder of Citizen Participation', JAIP, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969, pp. 216-224

²⁸ Collins, K & Ison, R 'Dare we jump off Arnstein's ladder? Social learning as a new policy paradigm'. In: Proceedings of PATH (Participatory Approaches in Science & Technology) Conference, 4-7 June 2006, Edinburgh.

- That the relationship between authorities and communities may be more complex than simply a contest for power.²⁹

5.3.1 Why Is An Evidence Base Needed?

It is important that this is an evidence-led strategy, taking account of measurable data relating to each of the thematic focus areas described in the discussion paper. This baseline will inform the design of key performance indicators that are necessary to measure the impact of the strategy:

- An evidence base should take into account both secondary data from available data sources (based on the key areas that the strategy will focus on) and primary information based on a consultation of the needs of local residents and stakeholders;
- The evidence could be collated internally or externally through an appropriate agency, though external consultation originates from an unbiased source.

5.4 Review of Current Services

The purpose of undertaking a review of current services in the context of developing an Anti-Poverty strategy is to:

- Establish to what extent are current service provisions fit for purpose;
- Examine the extent and level of services currently provided and how they can be made more accessible and/or affordable to those living in poverty or deprivation;
- Examine access and entitlement to financial and community support and benefits;
- Allow services to be utilised more effectively, cutting down on the potential need for additional provision.

5.5 Report Findings and Draft Strategy

Within this stage of production of the Anti Poverty Strategy the Key Stakeholder Group is called up to assess the findings of preceding activity and report recommendations for the strategy to the Partnership Board. In turn the Partnership Board is called up to draft the strategy, informed by Key Stakeholder Group, consultation and evidence base, and specifically to determine the answers to the following key questions:

- What is the focus of strategic action?
- What are the specific actions and interventions?
- How are responsibilities assigned?

²⁹ Ibid, pp 4-5

Based upon the answers to these key questions – exemplars of which are contained elsewhere in this report – the Partnership Board will publish the Draft Strategy alongside findings from consultation and evidence base.

5.5.1 Key Stakeholder Sign-Off

The draft strategy will then be subject to appropriate consultation offering opportunity for comment amongst the wider stakeholder group – including those from the target communities consulted as part of the development process. From the findings of our study the importance of this is highlighted in the following aspects:

- It is vitally important that the all stakeholders and resident representation are given the chance to comment on the draft strategy;
- Following this consultation period the Partnership Board must be able to demonstrate that they have “taken on board” comments and make amendments as they deem suitable, where not accepted there must be a rationale provided.

5.6 Publish Strategy and Assign Monitoring Responsibility

The final step in developing an Anti Poverty Strategy for Hinckley and Bosworth involves the publication and distribution of the final product, ensuring that the key messages and actions are communicated to residents – particularly those who are living in income deprivation. At this stage the remaining key questions to be answered are:

- Who is going to be responsible for progress and success monitoring? (*HBBC?*)
- Specific interventions / measures monitored by specialist agencies?

Appendices to Main Report

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REPORT OF HEAD OF CORPORATE AND SCRUTINY SERVICES
RE: ANTI POVERTY STRATEGY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To introduce to the Commission the first draft of the Anti Poverty Strategy for Hinckley and Bosworth.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Scrutiny Commission

- (1) Notes and endorses the work undertaken to date and make comment on the Draft Anti Poverty Strategy.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

3.1 Following the work undertaken by the commission and CI research, the decision was taken that HBBC take a lead, particularly in the current climate, to prepare a strategy addressing Poverty in the Borough.

3.2 The Strategy to date has been prepared by a small team of officers with input from a number of services in the Authority. Data has been incorporated from various sources to provide intelligence and baseline information in the report.

3.3 The next steps are to finalise the Draft Strategy and circulate it for Consultation with key stakeholders before bringing it back to this Commission for endorsement.

3.4 The Draft Strategy is attached for comment.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None as a direct result of this report

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None

6. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

6.1 This report and review contributes directly to the Corporate Aim of a thriving economy and to the corporate value of providing support to those who need it most.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 Stakeholders across voluntary sector, faith communities and key agencies.

8. **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Failing to challenge and offer recommendations leading to the community not recognising the importance of the Scrutiny Commissions opportunity to develop policy	Finalise report Offer Recommendations Publicise the report and successes	L Horton

9. **RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

The review is of poverty and income deprivation for the whole community of Hinckley and Bosworth. The strategy will address rural and urban parts of the authority.

10. **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

None

Background papers: Scrutiny Commission papers and reports associated with Income Deprivation April 2007 and February 2008.

Contact Officer: Louisa Horton x 5859



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

A Borough to be proud of

Anti-Poverty Strategy 2009-2012

‘Working Together to Tackle Poverty’

Contents

	Page
1.0 Foreword	3
2.0 Introduction	4
3.0 Definitions	5
4.0 Background	6
4.1 Local Context	
4.2 Indices of Deprivation for Hinckley & Bosworth	
4.3 Research	
4.4 Consultation to date	
5.0 Current Initiatives	10
6.0 Key Themes	11
7.0 Monitoring- Performance Management	13
8.0 Action Plan (to follow)	
9.0 Appendices (to follow)	

1.0 Foreword

Endorsement of member or appropriate organisation

Insert photo

DRAFT

2.0 Introduction

Our vision is 'to improve the quality of life for communities in Hinckley & Bosworth.' The target groups within this vision are those individuals and groups of individuals within the Borough who are within the 25% most deprived areas in England. The main aim of this strategy is to address the causes and effects associated with the key themes, identified by consultation and research, which combined, create poverty and deprivation within our Borough.

These 7 key themes are:

- Income deprivation
- Employment deprivation
- Health deprivation and disability
- Education, skills and training deprivation
- Barriers to housing and services
- Living Environment Deprivation
- Crime & Anti-social behaviour

This Anti-Poverty Strategy which has been developed in partnership with an appropriate group of different agencies and community groups will address these priorities individually and put actions into place to work towards alleviating the problems through a holistic approach.

This strategy will build on the work of the Community Plan 2008-11 "Working towards a Better Borough" for Hinckley and Bosworth, the Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2009-12 and will contribute to the corporate value of 'providing support to those who need it most', by forming a social inclusion framework that will underpin future strategic development within the Borough and ensure that Hinckley and Bosworth's most vulnerable groups and individuals are not prevented from fulfilling their potential.

The strategy will endeavour to develop a range of innovative projects, which will be reviewed and monitored within a robust performance management framework, and for all agencies within the Borough to work together with a view to contributing to the alleviation of poverty.

This strategy will be a tool, which will influence other related policies and strategies development across the Borough.

The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has the responsibility of making sure that the Community Plan is delivered. Local partners, involved in the development of the Community Plan have already identified 'to improve the quality of life in the priority neighbourhoods' and 'the establishment of accessible services in Hinckley & Bosworth' as key priorities. These priorities will contribute towards the seven Sustainable Community Strategy Priorities.

The Anti-Poverty strategy belongs to the community of Hinckley & Bosworth NOT just the Council. As such, in order to ensure that it meets our vision it has to be adopted by the community and its existence publicised widely. The Corporate Communications & Engagement Strategy will be adopted to ensure effective communication and engagement with the whole community.

This strategy seeks to address immediate issues in view of the severe financial downturn and then medium term and longer term actions and aspirations. In the current economic climate there is recognition that all sections of the community can be affected, e.g. job losses. The general principles of this strategy will seek to address all aspects of poverty across the whole of the community.

3.0 Definitions

Poverty:

Is a life situation people may find themselves in, if their income and resources are not enough to allow a standard of living, which is relative to, customary, widely encouraged and approved in the societies in which they belong¹

Poverty is mainly caused by factors outside the control of the individual such as unemployment, disability, low pay and poor educational opportunity. Individuals who are particularly vulnerable are disabled, ethnic minorities, unemployed, older people and people on low pay. Within these groups women and children are particularly affected.

For the purpose of this strategy Hinckley and Bosworth have adopted the following definition:

Individuals and groups are considered to be in poverty if their resources prevent them from having control over and choices in their lives and are prevented from having the standard of living which is customary in the society to which they belong.

Income Deprivation:

The definition adopted by the Scrutiny Commission following research by Matters of Fact consultancy is:

Household income that is 60% or less of the average household income in a year.

Social Exclusion:

Is a situation which arises when a person (or a group of people) is (or are) unable to or denied access (intentionally or not) to information, services and influence within a community. Barriers to access, if overcome, would alleviate this sense of exclusion.²

LSOA (Lower Layer Super Output Area):

Super Output Areas are standardised statistical reporting units, based on the 2001 Census. An LSOA contains an average population of 1500 residents.

Social Inclusion:

Is a process which aims at breaking the cycle of poverty and exclusion by enabling people to gain access to opportunities, information and resources required to become active citizens.³

¹Joint report on Social Inclusion, Commission of European Commissions, Brussels, 12.12.2003. The definition also borrows from Peter Townsend in poverty in the United Kingdom: A Survey of Household Resources and Standards of Living, 1979, Poverty News, October 2005.

² Bedford Social Inclusion/Anti-Poverty Strategy 2006-07

³Summary of explanations in: Joint report on social inclusion, Commission for European Communities, Brussels 12.12.2003:Shafik Ansate, What is inclusion?

4.0 Background

The need for a review into income deprivation within the borough of Hinckley & Bosworth was highlighted in 2006/07 by the Scrutiny Commission. A decision was made to include it in the Commission's work programme. The Commission's objective for the review was to improve the quality of life of people living in poverty in the area. This remains a primary concern heightened by the current economic downturn.

4.1 Local Context

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough is a largely rural borough of 297 square kilometres in south-west Leicestershire. The majority of the 103,800 (mid 2006 estimate) population live in the main urban areas of Hinckley, Burbage, Barwell and Earl Shilton in the south-west of the Borough.

Historically, the economy of the area has included a strong element of manufacturing, including family-owned hosiery, textiles and footwear firms. The economy today retains higher than average levels of manufacturing despite the decline of traditional industries. In recent years its central location and good links to the motorway and trunk road network have encouraged a growth of warehousing and distribution, particularly around the A5 corridor.

In numerical terms, Hinckley & Bosworth's population is less diverse than some neighbouring areas and the small resident Black Minority Ethnic population (3.5%) is fairly dispersed. However a wide range of ethnic backgrounds is represented amongst the Borough's residents and workforce.

4.2 Indices of Deprivation for Hinckley & Bosworth

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 (IMD 2007) is a measure of multiple deprivation at the small area level.

The IMD 2007 contains seven themes of deprivation:

- Income deprivation (Split into children & Older people)
- Employment deprivation
- Health deprivation & disability
- Education, skills and training deprivation
- Barriers to housing and services
- Living environment deprivation
- Crime

There are 66 LSOA's (Lower Super Output areas) in Hinckley & Bosworth and as an authority overall Hinckley & Bosworth is within the 25% least deprived authorities in England, however 23 LSOA's within the borough are within the 25% most deprived areas in England in one or more Domains of Deprivation. These statistics indicate that although Hinckley & Bosworth as a Borough does not exhibit high levels of deprivation as a whole, there are pockets of high deprivation within the Borough.

IMD 2007 (based on 2005 data) summaries for Hinckley and Bosworth for the seven themes listed above are detailed below:

Indicators used to determine income deprivation:

- Adults & children in Income Support Households
- Adults & children in Income-Based Job Seekers Allowance Households
- Adults & children in Pension Credit (Guarantee) Households
- Adults & children in those working Tax Credit Households where there are children in receipt of Child Tax Credit whose equivalised income (excluding housing benefits) is below 60 per cent of the median before housing costs
- Adults & children in Child Tax Credit Households (who are not eligible for IS, Income-Based JSA, Pension Credit or Working Tax Credit) whose equivalised income (excluding housing benefits) is below 60 per cent of the median before housing costs
- National Asylum Support Service (NASS) supported asylum seekers in England in receipt of subsistence support, accommodation support, or both

LSOA's (Children) most deprived in Hinckley & Bosworth (Bottom 5%)

- Earl Shilton East
- Hinckley Westfield Junior School
- Hinckley Trinity West

LSOA's (Older people) most deprived in Hinckley & Bosworth (Bottom 5%)

- Barwell Centre
- Earl Shilton East
- Hinckley Westfield Junior School

Indicators used to determine employment deprivation:

- Recipients of Jobseekers Allowance (both contribution-based and income based) for men aged 18-64 and women aged 18-59
- Participants in the New Deal for the 18-24s who are not in receipt of JSA
- Participants in the New Deal for 25+ who are not in receipt of JSA
- Participants in the New Deal for Lone Parents (after initial interview)
- Incapacity Benefit recipients aged 18-59 (women); 18-64 (men)
- Severe Disablement Allowance recipients aged 18-59 (women); 18-64 (men)

LSOA's (Employment) most deprived in Hinckley & Bosworth (Bottom 5%)

- Earl Shilton East
- Hinckley Westfield Junior School
- Hinckley Trinity West

Indicators used to determine health deprivation & disability:

- Years of Potential Life Lost (YPLL)
- Comparative Illness and Disability Ratio (CIDR)
- Measures of acute morbidity, derived from Hospital Episode Statistics
- The proportion of adults under 60 suffering from mood or anxiety disorders based on prescribing,

LSOA's (Health) most deprived in Hinckley & Bosworth (Bottom 5%)

- Earl Shilton East
- Hinckley Westfield Junior School
- Hinckley Trinity West

Indicators used to determine education, skills & training deprivation:

Sub Domain: Children/Young people:

- Average test score of pupils at Key Stage 2
- Average test score of pupils at Key Stage 3
- Best of 8 average capped points score at Key Stage 4
- Proportion of young people not staying on in school or non-advanced education above the age of 16
- Secondary school; absence rate (2 year average 2004-2005)
- Proportion of those aged under 21 not entering higher education (4 year average, 2002-2005),

Sub Domain: Skills

- Proportion of working age adults with no or low qualifications

LSOA's (Education) most deprived in Hinckley & Bosworth (Bottom 5%)

- Barwell East
- Earl Shilton East
- Hinckley Trinity West

- Hinckley Trinity West
- Newbold Verdon North
- Ratby North

Indicators used to determine barriers to housing and services:

Sub Domain: Wider Barriers

- Household overcrowding
- District level rate of acceptances under the homelessness provisions of the 1996 Housing Act, assigned to the constituent LSOAs
- Difficulty of Access to owner-occupation

Sub Domain: Geographical Barriers

- Road distance to a GP surgery
- Road distance to a general store or supermarket
- Road distance to a primary school
- Road distance to a Post Office or sub post office

LSOA's (Barriers to Housing & Services) most deprived in Hinckley & Bosworth (Bottom 5%)

- Higham-On-The-Hill, Sibson & Sutton Cheney
- Desford North & Peckleton
- Twycross & Sheepy

4.3 Research-

Two reports have been commissioned to date:

- **Matters of Fact Consultancy** reported in April 2007. They aimed to define income deprivation and understand the geography of income deprivation within the Borough. The report concluded that the most common definition of income deprivation in economically advanced societies is a household income that is 60% or less of the average household income.
- **CI Research Consultancy** reported in February 2008. They aimed to develop local strategies and policies to address situations arising from local income deprivation. The report highlighted best practice approaches and case studies which have demonstrated success. The report concluded by identifying recommendations to move forward and this approach was endorsed by the Scrutiny Commission. The recommendations focused on working with partners, providing a real and meaningful voice for residents and enhancing the work already undertaken in the Borough. The proposed action, endorsed by the Scrutiny Commission, was to establish a working group to take forward the conclusions of the studies and develop local strategies and policies to address income deprivation in the Borough.

4.4 Consultation- to date

Two stakeholder workshops and a designated officer workshop have taken place to date. A Stakeholder Workshop was held in December 2008 to identify areas for development. Stakeholders included officers, members, Citizen's Advice Bureau, CI Research, the voluntary sector, Job Centre Plus and the faith communities. The stakeholders who attended the workshops were keen to see a strategy developed and increase partnership working. The areas for development identified by the stakeholder group were:

- Advice, training & assistance
- Link with employers creating redundancies to offer support in conjunction with others
- Standard referral and income and expenditure/means form
- Improved sharing of information and communication between departments and outside agencies
- Improvements to MAF and CAF
- Need to reach hard to reach groups
- Improved customer profiling
- Improve awareness & knowledge of key agency resources
- Improved access to ICT
- Use of Parish councils & community houses to improve accessibility of services
- Involvement of private sector
- Credit Unions
- Mortgage rescue packs
- Review of and make consistent fees in relation to people on low income
- Review of affordable Housing
- Allocations policy to take account of people on low income
- Review of Corporate Debt Policy

5.0 Current Initiatives

Homelessness Frontline Prevention Fund

The fund sets out a framework under which payments can be made to households facing homelessness to enable them to remain in their existing accommodation or access alternative housing.

Pest Control Discount to low income groups

An up to 30% discount is available to recipients of Income Support, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit for pest control treatments

Workforce development- the Children's workforce

The strategy is a single framework to help join up children's services to prevent children and young people falling through the gaps.

The Ten Year Childcare Strategy

The purpose of this strategy is to address the need for affordable, accessible childcare. Enabling parents to then be supported back into long term employment. There is a commitment to halve child poverty by 2010 and eradicate it by 2020.

Children's Centres

In Hinckley and Bosworth Borough there are five children's Centres currently with more to be developed.

By bringing together a range of services into the local community it will allow parents easier access to information and support from a range of services including:

- Health services
- District councils
- Voluntary organizations
- Job Centre Plus
- Family outreach workers
- Libraries
- Family Information Service

Benefit Take up Strategy

Affordable Housing

Benefit Take-up Campaign

Regular campaigns take place throughout the year to raise awareness of Housing and Council Tax Benefit to ensure people in the borough on low income (particularly the more vulnerable) are claiming the benefit they are entitled to.

Financial Assistance available to repair or adapt properties

The Local Authority offers a number of schemes to assist homeowners and in some circumstances private tenants to repair or adapt their homes:

- Major Works & Minor Works Assistance
- Warm Front Top up Assistance
- Disabled Facilities Grant

These schemes are readily available to the elderly, disabled and people on low incomes.

Decent Homes Insulation Scheme

Working in partnership with Energy Saving Partnership Ltd (ESP) and Energy Services North East the Council offers, every private householder living in our declared priority neighbourhoods, free of charge loft and cavity wall insulation. By targeting this scheme at these neighbourhoods we will be directing the resources to those households which are more likely to be in fuel poverty and finding it harder to heat their homes. It is anticipated that we would improve the energy efficiency of approximately 1200 households under this scheme.

6.0 Key Themes

Following the consultation process the following key themes have been identified:

6.1 Income deprivation

We make a commitment to:

- 6.1.1 Increase people's take-up of benefits
- 6.1.2 Promote better management of finances and improve the quality of life, reducing financial exclusion
- 6.1.3 Reduce the percentage of families with low household incomes
- 6.1.4 Make financial advice more readily available for all residents of the Borough
- 6.1.5 Increase financial literacy to help reduce financial exclusion

6.2 Employment

We make a commitment to:

- 6.2.1 Encourage social enterprise and business start-ups
- 6.2.2 Create & facilitate employment opportunities
- 6.2.3 Promote and support the work of small to medium sized enterprises

6.3 Health deprivation and disability

We make a commitment to:

- 6.3.1 Establish effective partnerships for the relief of poverty
- 6.3.2 Proactively tackle issues surrounding health deprivation, including, smoking, healthy eating, teenage pregnancy and home safety.
- 6.3.3 Introduce/manage a strategy that allows access to leisure and sporting facilities at an affordable price

6.4 Education, skills and training

We make a commitment to:

- 6.4.1 Promote access to learning centres
- 6.4.2 Work with our partners to develop sufficient childcare facilities and other support networks to make it possible for adults to learn
- 6.4.3 Work with our partners to raise the skill level amongst the Boroughs population particularly in areas of greatest social exclusion
- 6.4.4 Develop with all agencies advice and guidance networks across the Borough
- 6.4.5 Work with our partners to increase opportunities for training

6.5 Housing and services

We make a commitment to:

- 6.5.1 Maximise accessibility to affordable housing for local people
- 6.5.2 Improve equality of access to social housing
- 6.5.3 Support everyone's right to live in a decent home

6.6 Crime and anti-social behaviour

We make a commitment to:

- 6.6.1 Reduce crime and disorder levels within the Borough
- 6.6.2 Reduce anti-social behaviour and the fear of such within the Borough

6.7 Living Environment

We make a commitment to:

- 6.7.1 Improve the living environment of those living in poverty
- 6.7.2 Promote good environmental practices
- 6.7.3 Engage local communities to improve & take pride in their local community

7.0 Monitoring- Performance Management

We will report and measure our success based on tangible outcomes which reflect our commitments. and to monitor and review the aims of the Strategy, a Performance Framework will be developed that supports continuous improvement in key priority areas.

The ranking of all areas within Hinckley & Bosworth will also be monitored in line with the Indices of Multiple Deprivation statistics which are produced by the office of National Statistics every 3 years.

Below is a summary of the 7 themes of Poverty showing the overall ranking status between 2004 and 2007 of the 66 LSOA's.

The direction of travel (how many LSOA's have either improved or moved down in rankings) between 2004 and 2007 is also shown.

Income Deprivation - Children

Ranking within England	2004 position	2007 position
75% or above (least deprived)	26(39%)	31(47%)
25% to 75%	38(58%)	33(50%)
25% or below (most deprived)	2(3%)	2(3%)

Direction of travel:

- 41(62%) areas have improved since 2004
 - 25(38%) areas have moved down since 2004
-

Income Deprivation - Older People

Ranking within England	2004 position	2007 position
75% or above(least deprived)	18(27%)	22(33%)
25% to 75%	46(70%)	43(65%)
25% or below(most deprived)	2(3%)	1(2%)

Direction of travel:

- 34(52%) areas have improved since 2004
 - 32(48%) areas have moved down since 2004
-

Employment

Ranking within England	2004 position	2007 position
75% or above(least deprived)	27(41%)	33(50%)
25% to 75%	36(55%)	28(42%)
25% or below(most deprived)	3(5%)	5(8%)

Direction of travel:

- 41(62%) areas have improved since 2004
 - 25(38%) areas have moved down since 2004
-

Health

Ranking within England	2004 position	2007 position
75% or above(least deprived)	34(52%)	35(53%)
25% to 75%	32(48%)	29(44%)
25% or below(most deprived)	0(0%)	2(3%)

Direction of travel:

- 33(50%) areas have improved since 2004
 - 33(50%) areas have moved down since 2004
-

Education

Ranking within England	2004 position	2007 position
75% or above(least deprived)	11(17%)	14(21%)
25% to 75%	39(59%)	39(59%)
25% or below(most deprived)	16(24%)	13(20%)

Direction of travel:

- 31(47%) areas have improved since 2004
- 20(53%) areas have moved down since 2004

Barriers to Housing

Ranking within England	2004 position	2007 position
75% or above(least deprived)	36(55%)	36(55%)
25% to 75%	25(38%)	23(35%)
25% or below(most deprived)	5(8%)	7(11%)

Direction of travel:

- 24(36%) areas have improved since 2004
- 42(64%) areas have moved down since 2004

Crime

Ranking within England	2004 position	2007 position
75% or above(least deprived)	30(45%)	20(30%)
25% to 75%	35(53%)	42(64%)
25% or below(most deprived)	1(2%)	4(6%)

Direction of travel:

- 14(21%) areas have improved since 2004
- 52(79%) areas have moved down since 2004

It is envisaged that the working group will develop and ensure the delivery of the action plan and that the membership of the working group will be expanded to include a wide range of stakeholders and community representatives. The working group will have a key responsibility to ensure a fit for purpose performance management framework is set up and managed effectively.

The performance indicators will be monitored annually by the Scrutiny Commission and will be reported back to the Local Strategic Partnership.

9.0 Action Plan (to follow)

10.0 Appendices

Appendix A - LSOA's in Hinckley & Bosworth that are within the 25% most deprived areas in England in one or more poverty themes.

LSOA Name	IMD 2007 Children	IMD 2007 Older People	IMD 2007 Employment	Health	IMD 2007 Education	Barriers to Housing	IMD 2007 Crime	Living Environment
Higham-On-The-Hill, Sibson & Sutton Cheney	68%	56%	67%	73%	76%	7%	80%	46%
Barwell East	32%	37%	25%	38%	15%	95%	44%	90%
Barwell North	37%	47%	65%	76%	17%	86%	40%	82%
Barwell South	44%	47%	46%	54%	38%	94%	12%	76%
Barwell West	59%	53%	70%	74%	25%	93%	51%	91%
Burbage North West	41%	39%	25%	40%	23%	64%	42%	66%
Bosworth Battlefield Railway Line	77%	81%	87%	87%	89%	13%	92%	83%
Earl Shilton North East	35%	37%	49%	59%	24%	69%	51%	91%
Earl Shilton North	40%	61%	57%	60%	21%	91%	29%	52%
Earl Shilton East	28%	31%	23%	29%	9%	86%	17%	78%
Hinckley Castle South West	80%	42%	58%	70%	37%	86%	25%	29%
Hinckley Town Centre	52%	44%	51%	52%	39%	93%	17%	26%
Hinckley Westfield Junior School	20%	22%	16%	24%	20%	79%	57%	80%
Hinckley Middlefield Lane	50%	49%	55%	71%	22%	62%	56%	70%
Hinckley Trinity East	49%	35%	56%	54%	22%	66%	67%	75%
Hinckley Trinity West	22%	45%	14%	25%	8%	67%	33%	79%
Desford North & Peckleton	95%	83%	95%	91%	75%	10%	57%	85%
Newbold Verdon North	39%	46%	47%	53%	16%	85%	57%	82%
Desford East, Botcheston & Newton Unthank	75%	61%	80%	70%	85%	21%	70%	95%
Bagworth & Thornton	55%	58%	59%	73%	38%	13%	42%	71%
Ratby North	49%	53%	57%	54%	16%	50%	37%	78%
Witherley	79%	81%	78%	80%	81%	13%	69%	91%
Twycross & Sheepy	73%	61%	89%	83%	78%	2%	62%	79%

REPORT OF HEAD OF CORPORATE AND SCRUTINY SERVICES
RE: COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES REVIEW

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide feedback to the Scrutiny Commission regarding the outcomes from the Community Health Services Review consultation.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Scrutiny Commission notes the feedback of the review.

3. **BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT**

3.1 Over the past 12 months a number of proposals have been put forward for changes to Health Services across the County. For Hinckley and Bosworth Borough the proposals are particularly around the restructuring of the Hinckley District Hospital, the Community Hospital (Sunnyside) and the Health Centre based at Hinckley District Hospital.

3.2 Proposals to move the services provided currently on the Hinckley District Hospital site have been out for consultation with the public. The Scrutiny Commission have submitted their comments in this process.

3.3 Loughborough University have analysed the responses and produced a report to enable the Programme Board agree a way forward based on the feedback. Following the determination of the preferred option, the Trust is now undertaking work to prepare a Business Case for submission to the appropriate forum, in September 2009.

3.4 The proposal which has been supported is a move from Hinckley District Hospital to the current Community Hospital site. A major issue which came out of the consultation was transport to the new site. As a result of this there is a clear commitment to see a Transport Plan before the final plans are approved.

3.5 Another issue which was raised was the provision of a Minor Injuries Unit at the Community Hospital. The Primary Care Trust has said that this needs further work to ensure such units are in the areas that they need to be. This work is due to be completed by Summer 2009.

3.6 From 2 February 2009 there have been changes to the Out of Hours Service. The new system is being continuously monitored and is subject to review to assess its success, which is due to be completed by Spring 2009.

3.7 The Out of Hours Service is provided as follows:
(a) Clinic at Community Hospital 6.00 pm - 9.00 pm Mon-Fri, GP led.

- (b) Home visits by a crew (GP and another healthcare professional) based in Hinckley and Bosworth until 12 midnight weekdays, all day weekends/bank holidays.
- (c) At any other time a home visit will be made by a GP working across the County.

*It is important to note that home visits will continue where people are unable to attend surgeries/clinics.

- 3.8 The new, expanded Community Hospital will offer all the services currently provided on the District Hospital site and will be expanded to offer diagnostic testing and additional out-patient services and theatres.
- 3.9 The Trust has confirmed that the District Hospital will remain open and all services still provided until they are capable of being provided at the Community Hospital. No decisions will be taken on the future of the District Hospital site until 2011, and there is a commitment that if at all possible the proceeds will be reinvested in Hinckley and Bosworth.
- 3.10 The Scrutiny Commission on 16th October 2009 put forward the following:

Final Recommendations

- That a Minor Injuries Unit should be established at the Community Hospital Site in Hinckley, which should provide an out of hours provision until midnight with GP provision attached.
- That the proposal for a healthcare hub be supported but that the out of hours provision be extended to 12 midnight.
- That the proposal for a nurse led service at the Community Hospital be supported but concern expressed and a request submitted for a GP led service from 8am – 10 pm or later
- That the transport be considered extremely carefully by the PCT before instigating the move to a one stop hub. In particular that the bus service be extended to enter the hospital site rather than stopping on the main road.

The proposals have taken the Commission's concerns into account and most significantly the Commission can note that the provision of a Minor Injuries Unit is still being considered, that the out of hours provision for Hinckley and Bosworth is now being provided and that there is a GP led clinic at the site until 9pm. With regard to transport the Trust has confirmed that there needs to be a detailed Travel Plan in place prior to commencement of the move to a healthcare hub on the Community Hospital site.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None arising directly from this report

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

None arising from this report

6. **CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

This report and review contributes directly to the Corporate Aim of being Proud of our Strong and Distinctive Communities.

7. **CONSULTATION**

Leicestershire County and Rutland Primary Care Trust

8. **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner

10. **RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

The review includes access to Health care out of hours for the whole community of Hinckley and Bosworth.

11. **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

- None

Background papers: The Community Health Services Review Public Consultation Presentations and Minutes of the Scrutiny Commission Interim Report

Contact Officer: Louisa Horton x 5859

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 12TH JANUARY 2009**REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE RE: HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP END OF YEAR UPDATE ON THE PARTNERSHIP****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide the Scrutiny Commission with an end of year update on performance and achievements of the Hinckley and Bosworth Community Safety Partnership.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Commission notes and considers the content of this report.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 3.1 Following a review of the Hinckley and Bosworth Community Safety Partnership commissioned by the Scrutiny Commission it was agreed that an annual update report be provided to members.

- 3.3 This report outlines key areas of performance, challenges and successes of the Partnership.

4. PERFORMANCE

- 4.1 The end of year performance (Jan to Dec 2008) is outlined in the table below. The table compares performance over the last two years.

The below table outlines continued areas of improvement

Category	% Variation	07/08	06/07
Total Crime	-4.73%	-247	-1251
Burglary Dwelling	-18.81%	-60	-168
Assault Less Serious Injury	-19.51%	-93	-130
Violent Crime	-5.65%	-66	-311
Criminal Damage	-17.32%	-207	-399

4.2 The below table outlines areas of performance that have deteriorated compared to 07/08 but are still lower than 06/07.

Category	% Variation	07/08	06/07
Burglary OTD	+4.74%	+18	-25
Theft From Vehicle	+13.88%	+58	-170
Total Vehicle Crime	+9.22%	+54	-172
Serious Violent Crime	No Change	(29)	-1

4.3 The below table outlines performance in the Partnership's key priority area of Earl Shilton and Barwell.

Category	08/09	07/08	06/07
Overall Crime	918 (-98)	1016	1267
Burglary Dwelling	52 (-16)	68	130
Burglary OTD	46 (-27)	73	75
Total Vehicle Crime	93 (-6)	99	160
Total Serious Acquisitive Crime	151 (-20)	171	239
Criminal Damage	228 (-2)	230	315
Total Violent Crime	18 (-5)	23	27
Serious Violent Crime	5	5	6
Assault with Less Serious Injury	76 (-32)	108	103
Theft Other	166 (-15)	181	176
Theft Cycle	23 (-2)	25	20
Robbery	6 (+2)	4	3
Sexual Offences	13 (+3)	10	23

4.4 All data provided by Leicestershire Constabulary Hinckley Local Policing Unit though awaiting authentication by Government East Midlands IQUANTA data base

4.5 The Safer Hinckley Christmas campaign has yielded the following results:

- Reduction In Assaults – Down 46%
- Only 7 Assaults Reported
- Reduction in Assaults and Public Order – Down 33%

- Theft From Person Down – Down 75%
- Overall Crime Down – Down 31%
- 11% Rise in Positive Public Perceptions

5. **SUCSESSES**

The below are just a few examples of joint Partnership work that have had an impact on performance:

- Effective Restructure of the Partnership
- Sustained Crime Reduction since 2006
- Successful Seasonal Campaigns
- Model Community House Projects
- Blue Tooth Messaging Pilot
- Neighbourhood Watch Plus Scheme
- Safety Crew Booklet
- Domestic Violence Service
- Neighbourhood Action Teams
- Alcohol & Drugs Officers
- Beacon Status Round 9 – Reducing Re-offending Award
- Beacon Status Round 10 – After Dark category - Shortlisted

6. **CHALLENGES**

6.1 The Partnership has identified a number of challenges over the coming year as follows:

- PERFORMANCE
- Sustaining Crime Reduction
- Economic Downturn
- Rise in Acquisitive Crime
- Sustaining improvement against CDRP Family Group
- Reduced external Partnership Funding
- Local Area Agreement and National Indicators
- Improving public confidence

6.2 In order to meet the above challenges the Partnership has reviewed its Crime and Disorder Reduction Plan 2008/2011 priorities and underlying and action plans. The refreshed Plan is to be published on 1st April 2009 and reviewed on a quarterly basis. The refreshed plan now includes the following priority focus themes:

1. **Anti Social Behaviour**
2. **Substance Misuse Harm Reduction**
3. **Acquisitive Crime**
4. **Violent Crime**

The above priorities all contain the following key strands:

- Managing Prolific and Persistent Offenders
- Providing opportunities for young people at risk of offending or re-offending

- Building Public Confidence
- Equality of Service

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None arising directly from this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None as a direct implication of this report which is for noting and comment.

9. COUNCIL VISION

The Partnership assists the Council in achieving the following aims of the Corporate Plan 2008/2013

- Cleaner and greener neighbourhoods
- Safer and healthier Borough
- Strong and distinctive communities

10. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

The following implications have been taken into account:

- Community Safety – throughout the report
- Rural Implications – within Partnership Plan 2008/2011
- Environmental Implications – None Directly arising from the report
- ICT Implications – None directly arising from the report
- Asset Management – None directly arising from the report
- Human Resources – None directly arising from this report
- Equality of Service – None directly arising from the report

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

Management of Significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating Actions	Owner
NONE other than those already identified under Section 6 of this report entitled "Challenges"	Partnership Plan refreshed and priorities reviewed. Action plans being updated to reflect challenges	Ron Grantham

Background Papers:None

Contact Officer: Ron Grantham, Community Safety Manager ext 5832.



Hinckley & Bosworth
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REPORT NO SC71

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2008/2009

ISSUE 2008/07: February 2009

Welcome to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme, which sets out the work to be carried out by the Council's Scrutiny Commission during 2008/2009.

A structured, focussed and supported scrutiny process, which dovetails into the Council's wider democratic, performance and financial management processes, provides for an evidence based approach to challenging and developing the Council's long term vision and priorities and ensuring that the needs of the Borough's Citizens' are met.

This is the fourth year that we have managed the work of scrutiny through a work programme. Following a review of progress in November 2005, it was proposed that future work programmes be configured into the following categories to better represent all the roles and responsibilities of the Overview and Scrutiny Function:

- **Scrutiny Topics** – This includes items of particular interest to overview and scrutiny that can be classified as 'scrutiny topics' to investigate in particular detail.
- **Performance Management Information** – Information provided by the council identifying current performance levels against performance indicators, progress with implementation of business delivery plans, best value reviews and service improvement projects. This is in accordance with the Council's Performance Management Framework.
- **Participation in Policy Development Issues** – These are issues being revised or introduced by the Council or other external organisations. The Overview and Scrutiny Function should be engaged in the development of such matters so that the decision-making body (Executive, Council or external organisation) are informed of all possible views before taking a decision / agreeing a new policy. This will need to be updated in the Council's Constitution.
- **Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations** – The scrutiny committee will review progress with the implementation of previously agreed recommendations.
- **Committee Management Issues** – These include the minutes of previous meetings, progress reports on actions, overview and scrutiny work programmes and development issues for the overview and scrutiny function.

The Work Programme ensures that Scrutiny's work is:

outcome focussed;
prioritised accordingly;
resourced properly; and
project planned properly.

The Work Programme has been designed to ensure it is a living document and it will be reviewed at each meeting of the Scrutiny Commission, and the Select Committees will also review their sections at each of their meetings, to ensure it remains focussed and relevant.

Councillor Matthew Lay
Chairman of Scrutiny Commission

SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2008/2009

1. Citizens' Panel Consultation Results

- Use the results of the survey improving Your Area as a Place to Live and Work to inform priorities and policy.
- Report on issues identified in the 2007 results of Council Priorities & Budget Spend

2. Performance Improvement

- How the Council proactively manages performance to ensure that issues are addressed in a timely fashion and that there is continuous improvement; and
- Monitor the quarterly Performance Reports to Executive and the decisions they take.
- Risk Management

3. Implementation of Rural Areas Review

- Annual progress report on implementation of outcomes.

4. Review of the Local Strategic Partnership

- Monitor the effectiveness of the Hinckley & Bosworth Local Strategic Partnership and how it delivers effective outcomes for the community by provision of performance information

5. Community Services Strategy for Leicestershire & Rutland

- Update on local Health Economy
- Development of local facilities
- GP Out of Hours Access

6. Community Safety Partnership

- Quarterly report on progress of Partnership

7. Equalities Standard

- Scrutinise progress on Equalities

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

TIMETABLE

Scrutiny Commission - Thursday 12 February 2009						
Function	Activity/Objective	Reason	Desired Outcome	Vision, Values and Aims	Responsible (member/officer)	External Involvement
Scrutiny Topics	Housing Repairs and Maintenance Capital and Revenue Budgets					
	Anti Poverty Strategy – CI Research Final Report and HBBC Anti-Poverty Strategy					
	Community Health Services Review					
Performance Management Information	Planning and Enforcement Appeal Decisions					
Participation in Policy Development Issues	Review of Forward Plan to identify items	Scrutiny of Executive decisions	Identification of reports for review ahead of decision making	All Corporate Aims	Executive Member for Corporate Services / Head of Corporate & Scrutiny Services	
Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations	Community Safety Partnership – 6-monthly update	Monitoring progress of the partnership since the Scrutiny review	Improved partnership working	Strong and distinctive communities	Community Safety Manager	Community Safety Partnership
Committee Management Issues	Work Programme	Review work load for the year	Agreed forward work programme	All Corporate Aims		

Scrutiny Commission - Thursday 2 April 2008						
Function	Activity/Objective	Reason	Desired Outcome	Vision, Values and Aims	Responsible (member/officer)	External Involvement
Scrutiny Topics						
Performance Management Information						
Participation in Policy Development Issues	Review of Forward Plan to identify items	Scrutiny of Executive decisions	Identification of reports for review ahead of decision making	All Corporate Aims	Executive member for Corporate Services / Head of Corporate & Scrutiny Services	
Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations	Rural areas review					
Committee Management Issues	Work Programme	Review work load for the year	Agreed forward work programme	All Corporate Aims		

Scrutiny Commission - Thursday 7 May 2009						
Function	Activity/Objective	Reason	Desired Outcome	Vision, Values and Aims	Responsible (member/officer)	External Involvement
Scrutiny Topics						
Performance Management Information						
Participation in Policy Development Issues	Review of Forward Plan to identify items	Scrutiny of Executive decisions	Identification of reports for review ahead of decision making	All Corporate Aims	Executive member for Corporate Services Head of Corporate & Scrutiny Services	
Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations						
Committee Management Issues	Work Programme	Review work load for the year	Agreed forward work programme	All Corporate Aims		

COUNCIL SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2008/2009

1. Programme for each key frontline service

- Monitor improvements and delivery against our stated objectives under the Corporate Performance Plan as applied to key front line services in the community.
 - Groundcare, Refuse, Recycling, Street Cleansing and Neighbourhood Wardens
 - Environmental Health (including Pest Control)
 - Housing Benefits & revenues
 - Housing
 - Parks & Open Spaces and Leisure Centre
 - Development Control & Local Development Framework

2. Performance Management information – Performance indicators

- Scrutinise performance
- Data Quality
- Attendance Management

3. Environmental Sustainability

- Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change

4. Cultural Events

- Scrutinise successes of events and promote further activity/events in rural areas

5. Staff Survey

- Monitor Progress on actions to address issues of concern

COUNCIL SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

Timetable

Council Services Select Committee – Thursday 19 March 2009					
Function	Subject	Reason	Desired Outcome	Vision, Values and Aims	Responsible (member/officer)
Scrutiny Topics	Programme for each key frontline service: Parks & Open Spaces and Leisure Centre	Monitor improvements and delivery against the councils aims stated under the Corporate Plan	Better quality services and more community focused services	Cleaner & Greener neighbourhoods/ Safer & healthier borough	Deputy Chief Executive
	Programme for each key frontline service: Development Control, Building Control & Local Development Framework	Monitor improvements and delivery against the councils aims stated under the Corporate Plan	Better quality services and more community focused services	Thriving economy and Strong & Distinctive Communities	Director of Community & Planning Services
	Annual Review of Children & Young People's Strategy	Request of Scrutiny Commission	Monitor progress against the strategy	Safer & Healthier Borough	Deputy Chief Executive
Performance Management Information	Performance Management Framework – 3 rd quarter 2008/09				
Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations					
Committee Management Issues	Work Programme Review	Review the Work programme for the year to enable efficient work flow for the CSSC processes	Achieve Work Programme content & schedule agreed by Members	All Corporate Aims	Relevant Executive Members and supporting Officers

FINANCE AND AUDIT SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2008/2009

1. Internal Audit Work Programme

- Consider each Internal Audit Block and recommendations and ensure that recommendations are implemented and followed up

2. Financial and Budget Monitoring

- Prudential Indicator Report (March 2009)
- Treasury management Report (March 2009)
- Final Accounts 2007/08 (June 2008)
- Budget Strategy 2009/10 (August 2008)
- Budget Proposals (February 2009)
- Final Council Tax Report (February 2009)

3. Corporate Management

- Risk Management (May 2008 and November 2008)
- Annual Audit and Inspection Letter (March 2009)
- ISA260 Annual Audit Letter (September 2008)

FINANCE AND AUDIT SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

Timetable

Finance and Audit Services Select Committee – Monday 16 February 2009					
Function	Activity/ Objective	Reason	Desired Outcome	Vision, Values and Aims	Responsible (member/officer)
Scrutiny Topics	Investment Returns 2002/03 - 2007/08	Request of Select Committee	Awareness of performance re investment decisions	Thriving economy	Executive Member for Finance / Director of Finance
Performance Management Information	IT Strategy – Internal Audit Report	Ensure findings are considered	Recommendations are implemented	All Corporate Aims	Internal Audit
	Audit Blocks 4 & 5	Ensure findings are considered	Recommendations are implemented	All Corporate Aims	Internal Audit
	Revenue Budget and Council Tax Proposals to include Capital Programme, HRA budget and Review of Fees and Charges	Ensure Value for Money and allow backbench input into the Budget and Council Tax setting process	Ensure the Executive delivers good value improving services	All Corporate Aims	Director of Finance/ Accountancy Manager
Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations					
Committee Management Issues					

Finance and Audit Services Select Committee – Monday 16 March 2009					
Function	Activity/ Objective	Reason	Desired Outcome	Vision, Values and Aims	Responsible (member/officer)
Scrutiny Topics	Commercial Estates Strategy	To scrutinise finding of the Commercial Estates Review	Ensure effective management of the Council's assets	Thriving economy	Director of Finance / Estates and Asset Manager
	Data Quality Assessment – update	Request of Select Committee to monitor improvement on areas of 'adequate performance'	Monitor performance improvement	All Corporate Aims	
	Prudential Indicators and Treasury management	Ensure value for Money	Ensure the Executive delivers good value improving Services	All Corporate Aims	Director of Finance/ Accountancy Manager
	Annual Audit and Inspection Letter	Review work of External Auditors	Matters reported by External Auditors are considered by Members	All Corporate Aims	Director of Finance
Performance Management Information	Medium Term Financial Strategy	Ensure sound Financial Planning	Ensure Executive delivers good value improving Services	All Corporate Aims	Director of Finance
	Support Services Charging methodology	To ensure appropriate methodology used particularly when charging outside bodies	Proper Support Services Charges are made to end Services	All Corporate Aims	Accountancy Manager
Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations					
Committee Management Issues	Work Programme Review and set programme for 2009/10	Review the Work programme for the year to enable efficient workflow for the FASC process	Achieve Work Programme Content and schedule agreed by members		Relevant Executive Members and supporting officers



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FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL DECISIONS

FEBRUARY – MAY 2009

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
Council Offices, Argents Mead
Hinckley, LE10 1BZ

HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

INFORMATION ABOUT THE FORWARD PLAN

WHAT IS THE FORWARD PLAN?

The Forward Plan contains decisions which are due to be taken by Council, Executive or under delegated powers to individual Executive members or senior officers. Each plan covers a four month period and is updated monthly. The plan includes all decisions to be taken both “key decisions” (definition opposite) and non-key decisions.

WHAT INFORMATION IS CONTAINED IN THE FORWARD PLAN?

The Forward Plan details:

- The nature of the decision to be made and whether it is a key decision (definition opposite);
- The committee or individual who will take the decision;
- The date or period when the decision is to be taken;
- The stages which will be undertaken prior to the decision, both consultation and presentation to committees;
- The documents which will be presented to the decision maker(s);
- The author of the report.

You can view copies of the current Forward Plan on our web site (www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk) or alternatively at:

The Main Reception, Council Offices, Argents Mead, Hinckley

WHAT IS A KEY DECISION?

A key decision is an Executive decision which:

- involves expenditure (of reduction of income) of over £20,000 on any particular scheme/project;
- adopts a policy or strategy (which the Executive has the power to adopt);
- involves the adoption or amendment of the Scale of Fees and Charges;
- is one that affects the whole of the Borough and is one which the residents of Hinckley & Bosworth would normally expect to be notified or consulted; or
- involves a recommendation by the Executive to a Partnership organisation which will take the ultimate decision.

Decisions by the regulatory committees (ie Planning, Regulatory, Licensing and Standards) and Personnel Committee are never key decisions.

A copy of this Forward Plan can be downloaded from our website (www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk) or can be obtained by telephoning 01455 255879, sending a fax to 01455 635692 or emailing democraticsupport@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DECISIONS

Part 3 of the Council’s Constitution sets out which committee/individual has responsibility for taking decisions.

FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL DECISIONS

1 FEBRUARY 2009 TO 31 MAY 2009

FEBRUARY 2009

Details of Decision to be taken (* denotes key decision)	Portfolio/ Service	Decision Maker and Date(s)	Reporting Pathway and Date(s)	Consultees and Consultation Process	Documents to be submitted <i>(Report Author)</i>
LDS Amendment – Earl Shilton & Barwell SUE Area Action Plans DPD	Community & Planning Services	Executive 18 February 2009			Committee Report <i>(Katanya Barlow)</i>
Climate Change Strategy	Community & Planning Services	Council 24 February 2009			Committee Report <i>(Rob Parkinson)</i>
Cultural Strategy Review	Corporate & Scrutiny Services	Council 24 February 2009	Executive, 18 February		Committee Report <i>(Simon Jones / Karen Harris)</i>
Council Tax, Budget	Finance	Council 24 February 2009		Finance & Audit Services Select Committee, 2 February	Committee Report <i>(Sanjiv Kohli)</i>

MARCH 2009

No decisions to be taken.

APRIL 2009

Details of Decision to be taken (* denotes key decision)	Portfolio/ Service	Decision Maker and Date(s)	Reporting Pathway and Date(s)	Consultees and Consultation Process	Documents to be submitted <i>(Report Author)</i>
Housing Strategy Review	Community & Planning Services	Executive 8 April 2009			Committee Report <i>(Sharon Stacey)</i>
Tenant Satisfaction Survey results	Community & Planning Services	Executive 8 April 2009			Committee Report <i>(Sharon Stacey)</i>
Transport Framework Assessment SPD	Community & Planning Services	Council 14 April 2009		Scrutiny Commission, 2 April	Committee Report <i>(Richard Palmer)</i>
Medium Term Financial Strategy	Finance	Council 14 April 2009		Finance & Audit Services Select Committee, 16 March, Scrutiny Commission, 2 April	Committee Report <i>(Sanjiv Kohli)</i>

MAY 2009

No decisions to be taken.

DETAILS OF COUNCIL DECISION MAKERS

The table below details the Council's Service Areas and the Executive Member responsible for each with the Council Official responsible for service management.

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY / SERVICE AREA	EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AND CHIEF OFFICERS	HEAD OF SERVICE CONTACT DETAILS
Strategic Leadership and Direction of Travel	Councillor DC Bill (Leader) Mr S Atkinson (Chief Executive)	Tel: 01455 255606 Fax: 01455 890229 Email: steve.atkinson@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk
Community & Planning Services (including Car Parks, Development Services & Policy, Environmental Health (Commercial and Pollution), Housing and Licensing)	Councillor SL Bray (Deputy Leader) (Development Services & Policy) Councillor DS Cope (Housing) Councillor Mrs S Francks (Licensing) Mr T Prowse (Director of Community & Planning Services)	Tel: 01455 255694 Fax: 01455 890229 Email: trevor.prowse@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk
Corporate & Scrutiny Services (including Corporate Services, Community Safety, Cultural Services, Emergency Planning and Green Space, Performance & Scrutiny)	Councillor SL Bray (Deputy Leader) (Community Safety, Cultural Services and Emergency Planning) Councillor Ms Moore (Parks & Open space) Councillor DO Wright (Corporate Services, Performance & Scrutiny) Mr B Cullen (Deputy Chief Executive)	Tel: 01455 255676 Fax: 01455 635692 Email: bill.cullen@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk
Finance (including Accountancy, Customer Services, Estates & Asset Management, ICT, Internal Audit, Procurement and Revenues & Benefits)	Councillor KWP Lynch (Leader) Mr S Kohli (Director of Finance)	Tel: 01455 255607 Fax: 01455 251172 Email: sanjiv.kohli@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk
Business Development & Streetscene Services (including Refuse Collection, Street Cleansing, Grounds Maintenance)	Councillor Mrs S Francks Councillor Ms Moore Mr M Brymer (Head of Service)	Tel: 01455 255852 Fax: 01455 234590 Email: michael.brymer@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk
Rural Issues (across all portfolios and including Village Centres)	Councillor WJ Crooks Mr B Cullen (Deputy Chief Executive)	Tel: 01455 255676 Fax: 01455 890229 Email: bill.cullen@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk

Further clarification and representations about any item included in the Forward Plan can be made to the appropriate Executive Member and Head of Service either using the contact details above or in writing to: Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, Council Offices, Argents Mead, Hinckley, Leicestershire, LE10 1BZ. Representations should be made before noon on the working day before the date on which the decision is to be taken.

DECISION MAKING ARRANGEMENTS

The views of local people are at the heart of decision making at Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, because major decisions are made by Councillors who are elected every four years by local people. Councillors work with the communities that they represent to ensure that local priorities are reflected in the work that the Council does.

The Council is made up of 34 Councillors representing 16 wards. If you want to know which Councillor(s) represents your area or you would like to contact your Councillor(s) concerning an issue, you will find contact details on our website (www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk) or alternatively you can contact the Council on 01455 238141.

The Council is committed to the principle of open government and everyone is welcome to attend meetings (except for confidential business) and to receive details of non-confidential items. Below are further details of the Council's democratic decision making arrangements.

The Council

The Council is responsible for setting the budget and the policy framework. Each year there is an Annual Meeting, which selects the Mayor and Deputy Mayor (who are the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council) and decides the membership of the Scrutiny Commission and Regulatory Committees. There are six ordinary meetings of the Council per year, which make strategic, policy and major budget decisions. This Forward Plan details decisions to be taken by the Council over the next four months.

Executive Functions

Many day to day policy and operational decisions are taken by Executive, a group of eight Councillors comprising of the Leader, Deputy Leader and six Executive Members each responsible for an area of Council policy and activity. The Executive members and their responsibilities are detailed in the previous table.

Overview and Scrutiny Functions

Decisions of the Executive are subject to scrutiny by the Scrutiny Commission and two Select Committees, one responsible for Council Services and the other for Finance and Audit. The Scrutiny Commission and Select Committees also have a role in Policy development. In addition, Scrutiny Panels are established to oversee ad-hoc projects. The Council has two Panels reviewing Housing Allocations and E-Government. The Scrutiny Commission publishes an Annual Report and a Work Programme; this is available on the Council's website (www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/scrutiny) and from the Council on request.

Regulatory Functions

In addition the Council has established committees to deal with regulatory issues, these committees are Planning Committee, Licensing Committee, Regulatory Committee and the Standards Committee.

Further information about the Council's Decision Making Arrangements can be obtained from Democratic Services on 01455 255770.

HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL
FINANCE & AUDIT SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

22 DECEMBER 2008 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr PAS Hall - Chairman

Mr PS Bessant, Mr DM Gould, Mr MR Lay, Mr R Mayne and Mr R Ward.

Officers in attendance: Mr I Bham, Mr D Bunker, Mr S Kohli, Miss R Owen and Mrs S Stacey.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Mr PR Batty, Mr K Morrell and Mrs B Witherford.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared at this stage.

3. **MINUTES (FASC27)**

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2008 be agreed.

4. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008/09 TO 2011/12 (FASC28)**

Members received a report which presented the capital programme for the years 2007/08 to 2011/12. During presentation and discussions, the following projects were considered.

Leisure Centre

With regard to the increase in the Asset Management Enhancements budget of £185,000 to allow for key works to be undertaken at the Leisure Centre, Members were assured that these works were necessary and immediate in order to enhance the current leisure centre.

Council Offices

In response to a Member's question, it was clarified that the money originally set aside for refurbishing the Council Offices had now been allocated to the flexible working project and only essential works and repairs would be carried out on the offices. It was noted that further details on flexible working and office accommodation would be available for Council on 24 February. Members expressed concern with regard to the future of the civic function suggested that the Scrutiny Commission be asked to review this.

Greenfields Industrial Units Project

It was confirmed that this project was being resurrected and whilst some of the 'green' aspects of the original scheme were being retained, others were not.

HRA Capital Programme

Members were reminded that the repairs budget had been reduced but was still under pressure, although it was explained that the budget had not been increased for six years so it was expected to continue to be under pressure each year. It was stated that stock condition surveys would be commenced between January and April 2009 then more information would be available.

The impact of the reduction of planning fees, implications of concessionary travel and the drop in interest rates were also discussed, and officers said they would have more information by the time of the next meeting.

RESOLVED – the report be noted and Council be RECOMMENDED to approve the report.

5. CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL 2008/09 (FASC29)

Further to a request at a previous meeting, the Select Committee received a report which provided further information on the position regarding Concessionary Travel for the year 2008/09.

Members felt that as a representative of the County Council could not be present at this meeting, the item should be deferred and referred to the Scrutiny Commission on 8 January 2009.

RESOLVED – the Scrutiny Commission be asked to receive the report.

6. WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09 (FASC26)

Members gave consideration to the work programme for 2008/09. It was agreed that a report on the history of investment as requested at the previous meeting be brought to the Select Committee in February. With regard to the Medium Term Financial Strategy, officers were not able to confirm at this point if the report would be ready for the February meeting, but confirmed that the budget report would be presented to that meeting.

RESOLVED – the Work Programme be noted with the abovementioned amendments.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 2 February 2009.

(The meeting closed at 7.45 pm)

Minutes for Barwell and Earl Shilton Scrutiny Working Group Meeting Monday 26 January

In Attendance

Councillor Chris Ladkin (Chair and Earl Shilton TC & HBBC), Councillor Janice Richards (HBBC), Councillor John Bown (HBBC), Councillor David Gould (HBBC), Councillor James Moore (HBBC), Tracy Darke (HBBC), Councillor Michael Gould (Barwell PC), Judith Sturley (HBBC), Roger Lomas (Earl Shilton Town Council), Helen Harris (Leics C C)

Apologies

Andy Ellis, Andre Wheeler, Councillor Franks, Richard Palmer

Minutes of the Meeting of 6th October 2008

These were accepted and endorsed

Larnaca report

Tracy updated on this and it was agreed that the final version is being completed this week and will be sent out to the Group as soon as possible. Tracy explained that this document has been the start of the Masterplan process and the consultants will have to take account of its findings.

Update on the Masterplan Exercise for the Sustainable Urban Extensions

Tenders have been invited and need to be back by 16 February. Tracy explained that the exercise will take between 1-year and 18-months. Funding over 2-years is £330,000 of which £50,000 is being spent this year to include the Lanarca report. There was a discussion on the £24,000 spent on this report and price was questioned as some of the group especially Cllr Lomas thought the original price quoted was £15,000. Tracy explained that the final sum included extra printing/leaflet drops etc. A sheet explaining the breakdown of costs was requested and this was agreed to.

As well as the consultants working on the Masterplan there will be a dedicated full-time officer who will work closely with the consultants. This will be an 18-month post using an 'in house' Officer.

The question was asked as to who will finally sign off the Masterplan document. Tracy stated that this is a statutory process. Cllr Ladkin

agreed that Earl Shilton and Barwell are well represented in this and other groups and can therefore make their views known.

Roles of Groups involved with the Regeneration of Earl Shilton and Barwell / Working Together

A chart was circulated that demonstrates the role of various bodies and how the Scrutiny Group fits within the structure

Joint Town Centre Manager

Cllr Moore asked whether the Hinckley Town Centre Manager could have an advisory role to assist Earl Shilton and Barwell. Cllr Bown said he would like to see the job description as he thought it covered more than just Hinckley. Tracy said we would look into this and speak to Simon Jones concerning any spare capacity.

Progress of the Earl Shilton Bypass

Helen Harris said it is intended that the whole bypass would be completed by the end of March. However should there be severe weather it could cause problems as tarmac cannot be laid in frosty conditions. The question of a footpath alongside the road was discussed.

Neighbourhood Action Teams

Cllr Ladkin stated that over the next year the Scrutiny Working Group needs to look more closely at Neighbourhood Action Teams issues.

AOB

Cllr Moore stated that crime reporting in the area was not sufficient enough and this issue needs more investigation.
Public toilets provision was another issue and it was requested that capital spend next year should consider this point.

Date of Next Meeting

Monday 11th May at 6pm