

Date: 12 May 2010

To: Members of the Scrutiny Commission

Membership to be agreed at Annual Council

Copy to all other Members of the Council

(other recipients for information)

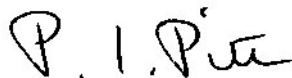
Dear Councillor

There will be a meeting of the **SCRUTINY COMMISSION** in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Hinckley on **THURSDAY, 20 MAY 2010** at **6.30pm** and your attendance is required.

The agenda for the meeting is set out overleaf.

Please note that there will be a pre-meeting for all Members of the Commission at 6.00pm in Committee Room 2, to prepare for the interviewing of witnesses.

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" between the two "Pitt"s.

Pat Pitt
Corporate Governance Officer

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 20 MAY 2010

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS
- RESOLVED 2. MINUTES

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 8 April 2010 attached marked 'SC1'.
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.
- RESOLVED 6. COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES REVIEW

Representatives of the Leicestershire County and Rutland NHS will be in attendance to update on this review.

A maximum of 20 minutes has been allocated this item.
- RESOLVED 7. SCRUTINY REVIEW: WINTER GRITTING

To scope the review into the gritting service. A representative of the County Council has been invited to the meeting.

A maximum of 20 minutes has been allocated for this item.
- RESOLVED 8. ANNUAL QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH THE LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER

The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council have been invited to the meeting.

A maximum of 30 minutes has been allocated for this item.

9. RURAL AREAS REVIEW

Report of the Executive Member for Rural Affairs attached marked 'SC2' (pages 1 - 30).

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

RESOLVED 10. SCRUTINY REVIEW: REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS

To formulate recommendations and conclude the review.

A maximum of 15 minutes has been allocated for this item.

11. PETITION SCHEME

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Direction) attached marked 'SC3' (pages 31 - 38).

A maximum of 5 minutes has been allocated for this item.

12. DRAFT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10 AND WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11

Attached marked 'SC4' (pages 32 - 64).

13. FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL DECISIONS

Copy of the Forward Plan for May – August 2010 attached marked 'SC5' (pages 65 - 70).

14. MINUTES OF SELECT COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

For noting only:

(i) Council Services Select Committee, 1 April 2010. Attached marked 'SC6' (pages 71 - 72);

(ii) Finance & Audit Services Select Committee, 12 April 2010. Attached marked 'SC7' (pages 73 - 76).

15. 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 of agenda 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 APRIL 2010 AT 6.30 PM

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

Mr JG Bannister, Mr PR Batty, Mrs S Francks, Mrs A Hall, Mr DW Inman, Mr CG Joyce, Mr C Ladkin, Mr K Morrell, Mrs S Sprason, Mr BE Sutton and Mrs BM Witherford.

Officers in attendance: Mr S Atkinson, Miss L Horton, Mr A Jones, Ms L Kirby, Mr S Kohli, Ms T Miller, Miss R Owen, Mr P Scragg and Mrs S Stacey.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.4 Messrs DS Cope and WJ Crooks also attended the meeting.

Also in attendance: Elaine Johnston and Chris Jones (Orbit Heart of England).

475 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Mr Gould.

476 **MINUTES (SC78)**

On the motion of Mr Bannister, seconded by Mr Hall it was

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

477 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mr and Mrs Hall and Mr Inman declared a personal interest in report no 'SC81', Parish & Community Initiative Fund Allocation of Grants for 2010.

478 **SCRUTINY REVIEW: REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS**

The Scrutiny Commission received a short presentation from representatives of Orbit Heart of England Housing Association and then asked questions of the representatives in order to progress the review of Registered Social Landlords operating in the Borough.

The representatives were thanked for their attendance and Members agreed that the closer partnership working proposed would be beneficial.

479 PARISH & COMMUNITY INITIATIVE FUND ALLOCATION OF GRANTS FOR 2010 (SC81)

The Scrutiny Commission was provided with details on applications to the Parish and Community Initiative Fund 2010/11, including those schemes proposed to receive grants and those who had not met the criteria.

In response to a Member's question, it was stated that an officer from the Green Space team visits all schemes when complete to ensure that the funding has been used as allocated.

Members felt that the slight underspend should be carried forward but acknowledged that they had recommended this the previous two years but it had not been agreed and asked that instead the underspend be shared between the successful schemes. In response the Chief Executive explained that in previous years the Fund had been undersubscribed so there had been no grounds to carry monies forward, but this year the position was different as there was an oversubscription, although some of the schemes had not met the criteria. In addition, it was felt that allocating additional funding to each project would not be appropriate.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the recommendations of the Panel be supported;
- (ii) the Strategic Leadership Board be RECOMMENDED to carry forward the underspend to next year's Parish & Community Initiative Fund.

480 SUB-REGIONAL CHOICE-BASED LETTINGS SCHEME (SC79)

An update on the Council's participation in the sub-regional choice based lettings scheme was provided. It was reiterated that allocations policies would still be in operation and the chance of being allocated a property in another district would depend on that authority's allocations policy.

With regard to advertising of vacant properties, it was noted that this would need to be done every two weeks and would be online and also in newsletters for those on the housing register who did not have access to the internet. It was also highlighted that support for vulnerable people would be provided.

Mrs Francks left the meeting at 8.15pm.

RECOMMENDED – the report be noted and progress be endorsed.

481 LOCAL LETTINGS POLICY FOR THE ALLOCATION OF COUNCIL FLATS ON MAUGHAN STREET / ALMEYS LANE, EARL SHILTON (SC80)

The Scrutiny Commission was advised of the proposal for the introduction of a Local Lettings Policy for the allocation of flats on Maughan Street / Almeys Lane, Earl Shilton, to achieve sustainable tenancies and to help improve the

reputation of the area. The intention to allocate these properties to over 40s was noted.

RESOLVED – the introduction of a Local Lettings Policy for the allocation of flats on Maughan Street / Almeys Lane, Earl Shilton be supported.

482 ESTABLISHMENT OF A LOCAL CREDIT UNION PROVISION (SC82)

Members were informed of progress in relation to the establishment of a local credit union provision. Members were reminded of the need to recruit more volunteers.

Mr Cope left the meeting at 8.28pm.

Concern was expressed that there may be some duplication between the advice provided by Orbit and that of the Credit Union. Officers agreed to check this.

It was agreed that promotional material be provided for Members and a briefing session be run.

RESOLVED – progress be noted.

483 BARWELL AND EARL SHILTON SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSION MASTER PLAN UPDATE (SC83)

The Commission was updated on progress on the Barwell and Earl Shilton Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) Masterplan. The wide consultation and events attended by residents and key stakeholders were outlined and it was noted that further consultation would be undertaken on the Area Action Plan and related documents over a longer period of time.

Mr Batty left at 8.46pm and returned at 8.50pm.

The problems in designing the Earl Shilton SUE were outlined and it was noted that a response from the Government Office was awaited with regard to alternative options. In response to a Member's question it was reported that there would not be such problems with the Barwell SUE as there was no hard boundary to the site.

A Member expressed concern with regard to Government policy on density, suggesting that developers had encountered problems selling properties at this density and if the requirements could not be met on this site, further sites would have to be identified.

RESOLVED – the actions taken and outcomes achieved be endorsed.

484 PEOPLE STRATEGY 2010-12 (SC88)

Attention was drawn to the late item which had been accepted at the request of the Chairman. It was noted that the People Strategy had been updated since 2008 due to internal and external factors. Members asked that the positive factors in employment at the Council be highlighted, including the fact that HBBC was one of the best public sector organisations to work for (as featured in the Sunday Times).

RESOLVED – the People Strategy and Action Plan be endorsed.

485 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10 (SC84)

Members received the Work Programme for 2009/10.

RESOLVED – the work programme be agreed.

486 FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL DECISIONS (SC72)

Members received the Forward Plan of Executive and Council decisions.

RESOLVED – the Forward Plan be noted.

487 MINUTES OF SELECT COMMITTEES

The minutes of the following meetings were received:

- (i) Finance & Audit Services Select Committee, 1 March 2010 (SC86);
- (ii) Council Services Select Committee, 18 February 2010 (SC87).

(The meeting closed at 9.07 pm)

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 20 MAY 2010

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEMBER RURAL AFFAIRS

RE: RURAL AREAS REVIEW

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Scrutiny members of the outcomes of the annual rural areas review report 2009/10.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Scrutiny Commission:

- 1) notes the delivery of provision within rural locations
- 2) endorses that any subsequent decision to increase provision, or reallocate existing resources within rural areas, be determined on the basis of a robust evidence base, i.e. proven (not perceived) need of provision.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 3.1. On an annual basis the rural affairs lead member, Councillor B Crooks, presents a rural areas review report to elected members, detailing how the authority's delivery against the Corporate Plan priorities, is impacting on our rural challenges. Elected members both through Executive and Scrutiny Commission continue to robustly challenge delivery of provision within our rural areas.
- 3.2. Historically, the rural areas review has been informed by assessing delivery against twelve key recommendations arising from a scrutiny commission review in 2006. However, following the 2008/09 annual report it was acknowledged that a number of the recommendations had been completed, or had subsequently been integrated within the authority's business development plans.
- 3.3. Therefore, for the 2009/10 annual review, a revised approach has been adopted, in both defining and reviewing our rural priorities. In undertaking this exercise the findings of a key report commissioned by Essex County Council, has been considered. This report examined:
 - The issues around living and working in rural Essex,
 - Made recommendations for the delivery of improvements in the quality of life in rural Essex, and,
 - Provided guidance on how these recommendations might be implemented.

Whilst clearly there are significant differences between the remit of Essex County Council and Hinckley and Bosworth, there are many common factors when considering the challenges of delivering in rural areas.

3.4. The review undertaken by Essex Rural Commission, makes 60 recommendations under twelve priority themed areas. An Executive summary is attached at **Appendix 1**.

3.5. Subsequently the twelve priority themed areas and the findings of the Essex Rural Commission report, have been utilised as a starting point, to establish the range of activity we are currently delivering within the Borough's rural areas. **Appendix 2** details both current and planned activities, setting out a comprehensive overview of this provision. ***Please note planned activities are detailed in italics.***

3.6. Subsequently the following recommendation is proposed:

- Scrutiny Members note the range of provision within rural locations
- To endorse that any subsequent recommendation to increase provision within rural areas, or reallocation of existing resources, be made on the basis of a robust evidence base i.e. proven (not perceived) need

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (DB)**

4.1. None arising directly from this report, however, any subsequent recommendation arising from this report, may require a reconfiguration of existing resource provision, and/or addition resources.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (LH)**

5.1. None arising directly from this report

6. **CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

6.1. The contents of the report relate to and support the following strategic aims:

- Cleaner and Greener Neighbourhoods
- Thriving Economy
- Safer and Healthier Borough
- Strong and distinctive communities
- Decent, well managed and affordable housing

7. **CONSULTATION**

7.1. The rural areas review 2009/10 has been informed through consultation with Service Heads and appropriate senior officers and partners, utilising existing evidence to inform activity and gaps.

8. **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

8.1. 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 were identified from this assessment:

No Net Red Risks

9. **KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1. The specific purpose of this exercise is to identify, and if subsequently recommended, the allocation of additional resources/reallocate existing resources, to focus on the priority needs within rural Hinckley and Bosworth, bringing greater equity to the allocation of overall resources across all geographical areas of the Borough.

10. **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

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

- Community Safety – None
- Environmental - None
- ICT - None
- Asset management None
- Human Resources – If recommended, the delivery of additional provision within our rural areas, will require a commitment from the local authority to identify appropriate officers, to support in the scoping, development and delivery of the additional workstreams and supporting actions plan.

Contact Officer: Edwina Grant, Strategic and Community Planning Officer, Ext 5629

ESSEX RURAL COMMISSION

Executive summary

Background

The Essex Rural Commission (ERC) was established in autumn 2008. It was asked by Essex County Council (ECC) to examine issues around living and working in rural Essex, to develop innovative recommendations for the delivery of improvements in the quality of life in rural Essex, and to give guidance on how these might be implemented. Essex is predominantly rural and coastal, but the characteristics of its communities are changing rapidly.

The Commission has looked to the future, mindful of the substantial environmental, economic and social changes likely to affect the people, institutions and environments of the county in the coming decades. Many of these changes similarly affect rural communities in other parts of the UK; some are distinct to Essex itself.

The Commission used a variety of methods to receive evidence, assess the problems of the county, and develop recommendations for the future. These included open evidence sessions at which 45 witnesses gave evidence and were questioned by the Commission; site visits; submissions of written evidence; survey; and attendance at existing meetings.

Economic sustainability

The dominant pattern of rural economic development in recent decades has been largely what is called 'exogenous', which implies mainly looking to the outside for solutions. The aim has been to attract external capital, technologies or institutions to local contexts to boost economies. Such recruitment remains an important strategy in rural and regional development, but it cannot work all the time if all counties and regions compete with each other for scarce resources. Local authorities or development agencies have to offer incentives to encourage businesses to relocate, such as land, infrastructure, tax breaks, and exemptions from regulations. All too often, the net effect is simply to move the drivers of economic growth around the country - from areas where businesses do not receive subsidies to those where they will.

An alternative pattern focuses on 'endogenous' approaches, which imply growing or originating from within. Here the priority is to focus on locally-available human, social and natural assets, and to ask: can anything be done differently that results in more productive use of these available resources? Such development tends to emerge from local communities and cultures and so reflects the needs of local people. This locally-based model for local economies and cultures seeks to identify, preserve and improve valuable assets. Every time someone buys something sourced from outside the

economy, then money leaks out. Each time raw materials are exported, then value is added somewhere else. Each time natural resources are depleted or polluted, or cultures are harmed, the local assets base diminishes. To balance such loss, assets must be created locally and/or money must flow in, such as a) when external people buy local products, such as food, timber, manufactured goods, tourist services, energy and information; b) when local people work outside and bring back or remit salaries; and c) when communities receive pensions, benefits and grants from central government.

The approach of the Commission has been first to recognise the value of attracting in external resources to the county, and second to seek ways to build on the distinctive nature of local assets, capacities, skills and environments. Here we look primarily at what can be achieved within the county by its own people and institutions. If this is successful, then businesses of all types will find it easier to attract customers and consumers. Such an approach would put Essex as a county on a pathway towards sustainability.

Recommendations

We make 60 recommendations in the form of an 'Essex Rural Clock' with 12 priority areas. The clock face does not imply any priority order but given the broad range of issues the Commission has addressed, it illustrates the scale of the challenge and opportunities ahead.

The Essex Rural Clock

- 1 - Expand rural enterprise in Essex
- 2 - Provide more affordable rural housing
- 3 - Transform buildings and space to multifunctional use
- 4 - Widen transport options
- 5 - Increase use and management of natural green spaces
- 6 - Secure an Essex food policy
- 7 - Celebrate and protect the coast
- 8 - Schools for both communities and children
- 9 - Establish a strategy for young and old
- 10 - Build community well-being and volunteering
- 11 - Initiate an Essex energy policy
- 12 - Nurture wilderness in Essex

1. Expand rural enterprise in Essex

Make it easier to run a business in rural Essex

We recommend:

- The expansion of universal New Generation Access broadband via all available technologies.
- More business advice and support via Business Link East.
- More hands-on advice on farm diversification projects to improve farm-based business expansion and employment.

- Establishment of forums across the county to ensure that landowners, planners and entrepreneurs work towards the common goals of improving the local economy which enhance the asset base

2. Provide more affordable rural housing

A ten fold increase is needed in affordable rural housing (ARH) provision in five years

We recommend:

- The development of a county-wide action plan to increase the rate of provision of ARH ten-fold.
- ECC rolls out a publicity campaign aimed at parish councillors and district planning committee members to explain the benefits of affordable rural housing and its social and economic benefits.
- Every parish or cluster of parishes should conduct a housing needs survey using a proven and widely-accepted approach and then be responsible for identifying potential sites for affordable housing if local needs are found to exist.
- Investing in new Community Land Trusts (joint ventures between housing associations, local authorities and local people) as a mechanism to ensure community involvement, control and responsibility in ARH.
- ECC assesses its own estate to release land for the provision of affordable housing to Community Land Trusts.
- Increased high-quality public site provision for gypsy and traveller communities.

3. Transform existing rural space and buildings to multifunctional use

Encourage co-location of services including advice centres and Internet access community hubs as well as on-line shopping ordering points

We recommend:

- Endorsement of the work being done by the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) and parish councils to bring about multifunctional projects.
- The provision of support to community groups for the widening of use of existing buildings (for example, village halls, churches, libraries).
- Support for ECC services with multifunctional capacity (for example, mobile libraries with community policy advice).
- Mobile Police Units should combine with Citizen's Advice Bureaux to offer
- services in rural communities.
- Provide ECC indemnity/insurance for local groups organising events.

4. Widen transport options

Rural areas need more than cars

We recommend:

- A scheme for free or reduced bus transport for the 18s and under.
- More public support for rural bus provision, and assessment of re-routing options to encompass villages without bus provision.
- ECC through the RCCE should ensure better communication between transport providers for the development of hubs and interchanges to encourage links between car-bus-rail-bicycle-walking use.
- Encouragement of innovative community transport schemes for all areas (such as Tendring and Maldon) across the county.
- Improve the 'roadscape' by introducing speed-limiting measures to encourage more cycling, walking and horse-riding on the county's lanes.
- Encourage more moped hire schemes for younger people (through RCCE).
- Encourage cycling and walking between rural centres by making footpaths and bridleways suitable for everyday, year-round use; introduce a network of 'inter-village routes' that are off-road but surfaced (and possibly lit) in such a way that makes cycling and walking possible all the time.
- Investigation of electric minibus services for commuters.
- Provide regular ferry services across all estuaries and along parts of the coast with good waiting and interchange facilities.

5. Increase use and management of natural green spaces

More people using green places and nature will produce a healthier population in Essex

We recommend:

- An assessment of Essex's excellent network of public rights of way to create more circular routes, with more linked car parks and public transport routes and amenities, and work with landowners to create permissive circular routes where possible or via planning gain from diversification projects.
- Making available maps and guides for these routes in attractive publications displayed on-line and in the usual information points and also at GP surgeries, school and colleges, leisure centres and private gyms across the county.
- Development of schemes to allow groups of young people to have access to areas of designated rural or farm land to manage nature, rights of way, and other projects on a time limited basis, thus giving children a sense of ownership and pride in their local land.
- Establish a new generation of community orchards to grow local and traditional fruit varieties in rural villages and market towns (by using the ECC tree-planting scheme).

- Development of a scheme for farmers to donate land on a temporary basis for allotments for both rural and urban dwellers. Districts should identify sites for larger scale allotment schemes.
- Ensure that county-owned woodland is accessible and adequately managed for all for leisure, education and health.

6. Secure an Essex food policy

Essex consumers and institutions who buy local benefit the local economy and land management, reduce food miles, and increase a sense of local pride, leading to healthier population

We recommend:

The launch of an Essex food policy that will set out:

- how local authorities and other public sector bodies can procure local food and thus support local businesses and farmland management;
- how local produce can be best quality assured to remain attractive to Essex buyers;
- how producers/sectors of the local food economy can obtain local accreditation;
- a new network of county local food trails to encourage local people and tourists to visit local producers and their landscapes and buy direct.
- Continued support for many innovations that are already localising food and farming, such as the Essex Schools Food & Farming day, the Dengie Food and Leisure Trail, farmers' markets, community orchards and vegetable patches in schools.

7. Celebrate and protect the coast

The Essex coastline and estuaries are remote, tranquil and unique, and for too long have been the county's 'back yard' when they should be an impressive 'front garden'

We recommend:

- A robust approach by ECC to the Shoreline Management Plan and response to the Marine Bill, involving local farmer syndicates where possible, so that valuable farmland and wildlife habitats will be protected by a combination of 'hold the line' and 'advance the line' approaches, working wherever possible with local syndicates of farmers.
- An assessment of the full value (not just economic) of the agricultural and other land behind seawalls, as once lost to managed retreat or over-topping it is hard and expensive to reclaim.
- Increased access to coastal paths for different users whilst ensuring a balance is struck between habitat conservation and amenity. Circular paths, car parks and public facilities need to be introduced to make enjoying the coast easier. Schemes should be developed with local landowners and farmers.

- Develop a recreation use plan for estuary and inshore areas, including for sea angling, wildfowling, sailing and wind surfing. The health benefits of these pursuits should be promoted to all age groups, particularly the young, many of whom are losing contact with the natural environment.
- Promote the natural and built environment of Essex to all tourists and visitors through tourist routes, food trails, farm shops, quality holiday lets, restaurants, wedding and event venues which are beginning to flourish but need to be encouraged to establish sustainable businesses.
- Assess the options for sea and river transport, including better foot-ferries on all estuaries and more freight transport by water, with a dedicated section of Essex transport policy devoted to enhancing and encouraging coastal ship-borne trade.

8. Schools for both communities and children

Schools in rural areas form the bedrock of the community and are critical if rural Essex is to retain an intrinsically mixed population

We recommend:

- ECC continue its policy not to close any more village primary schools.
- Encouragement of the county's rural primary schools to provide buildings, space and facilities for use by the local community (with assurance that hire charges and insurance obligations are not prohibitive).
- Establishment of a programme of green outdoor education in all rural and urban schools using a wide range of green spaces beyond school bounds.
- Encourage all schools to provide healthy food education to children, develop their own gardens and allotments, and buy local food for their school dinner provision.

9. Establish a strategy for young and old

Increase inter-generational connections within rural communities of Essex

We recommend:

- The launch of an intergenerational scheme to support links between young and old (for example, between primary schools and care homes).
- Encouragement of Parish Councils to ensure all villages have space where local children can 'free-range', thus providing incentives to play, be active and socially connect.
- Develop a county-wide healthy walking scheme for the elderly.
- Support dog-walking and dog-sitting schemes for the elderly.
- Develop computer training schemes delivered by the young for the elderly.

10. Build community well-being and volunteering

A strong part of well-being arises not only from personal health and family but also from community linkages, and all forms of volunteering are an important part of rural community life

We recommend:

- The launch of a county-wide volunteering scheme (targeted especially at the out-of-work and elderly) to build and strengthen village institutions.
- A return to proper rural policing with every community in Essex having a designated officer with the appropriate skills and knowledge (one officer in charge of a small number of villages).
- All parish councils are encouraged to complete village design statements or parish plans to assess all aspects of community well-being, including a Community
- Landscape Character Statement dealing with the settlement's surroundings .
- The establishment with Citizens Advice Bureaux of a training programme for parish clerks and elected councillors to become qualified advisers and village agents.
- An investigation of the wider regulatory burden on locations (for example, buildings and village halls) and on people (for example, volunteers), and identification of solutions to encourage more volunteering, particularly for youth, children and elderly.

11. Initiate an Essex energy policy

Increasing energy generation and conservation will reduce the carbon footprint of the economy of Essex, save consumers and businesses money, and contribute to rural jobs

We recommend:

- Establishment of a micro-power generation scheme for schools and other public buildings, based on woodchip boilers using wood from Essex woodlands or on anaerobic digester power plants using food waste, farmyard manure, straw and/or other second generation fuels.
- Establishment by Essex County Council of an independent energy advisory service to advise on the most efficient energy generation and conservation schemes in private homes and in public institutions.
- Support for establishment of fuel-oil rings within parishes or parish clusters to reduce the price of fuel.
- Establishment of a 'solar-power for all by 2020' scheme for Essex - all houses and private businesses in Essex to have solar power in the next decade.

12. Nurture wilderness in Essex

The wildernesses of Essex are unique and should be protected

We recommend:

- Continued support and protection of the landscapes, habitats and ecosystems of rural and coastal Essex that provide the country's unique character and identity.
- Assessment of the economic value of the ecosystem services (for example, flood protection, pollination, carbon sequestration, amenity) provided by the natural and semi-natural habitats of Essex and thus an improved understanding of their value to the people and economy of the county.
- Collaboration with Essex Wildlife Trust and other conservation agencies to improve the biodiversity status of all flora and fauna of Essex (including species introductions and revitalisation, habitat connectivity and resilience, conservation and protection).
- Promotion of the value of wild Essex and its biodiversity, tranquillity and rural character on a national stage as a national destination.

Appendix 2

RURAL AREAS REVIEW ANNUAL REPORT - 2009/10

* PLEASE NOTE THE INFORMATION PRESENTED IN ITALICS IS PLANNED ACTIVITY as opposed to current activity

KEY THEMES	ESSEX REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS	HBBC ACTIVITY/PLANNED ACTIVITY
<p>Expand rural enterprise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expansion of universal New Generation Access broadband via all available technologies • More business advice and support via Business Link • More hands-on advice on farm diversification projects to improve farm based business expansion and employment • Establishment of forums across the Borough to ensure that landowners, planners and entrepreneurs works towards the common goals of improving the local economy which enhance the asset base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Regeneration Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>*Establishment of business support 'hot desk' provision in rural locations across the Borough</i> - <i>*Encourage appropriate farm diversification projects</i> - <i>*Support the development of key strategic development sites across the borough including MIRA, Mallory Park, Twycross, Nailstone Colliery, Timkins, etc.</i> - <i>*Support the work of parish councils and RCC in the design and delivery of Parish Plans</i> - <i>*Support village shops, Post Offices and community hubs via Vibrant Villages Initiative</i> - <i>*Promote uniqueness of towns and villages</i> - <i>*Promote Farmers Markets across the Borough</i> - <i>*Support the development of small scale tourism facilities e.g. Ashby Canal Corridor</i> - <i>*Advice and guidance to new/potential businesses promoting assets of the area</i> ○ LDF – Core Strategy Policy 7 Key Rural Centres: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>*Ensure there is a range of employment opportunities within the key rural centres, through enhancement of allocated employment sites in the key rural centres, as well as the development of employment uses, including home working</i> - <i>*Support new retail development to meet local need within defined local centre boundaries</i>

		<p><i>within key rural centres</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ LDF – Core Strategy Policy 23 Tourism Development: - <i>*Support tourism development for new and extended visitor attractions including major facilities e.g. Twycross Zoo, Bosworth Battlefield, Mallory Park and holiday accommodation</i> ○ Vibrant Villages Grant Programme ○ Parish and Community Initiative fund ○ Business Link Support available to all businesses ○ Business advisers available to all, to visit farmers, etc on site ○ Town Centre Partnership, offering advice, guidance and support to other key settlements ○ H&B Tourism Partnership, a working group of tourism businesses, Leicestershire promotions, LCC and HBBC with the aim of developing tourism and attracting more visitors to the area ○ Visitor guide – places to see and where to stay in the Borough ○ Support and advice to Parishes in relation to the organisation and delivery of events and activities, including engagement in extensive annual events programme ○ Safer food better business advice to all businesses (multi lingual provision) ○ Licensing advice and guidance across the Borough, including to boarding and breeding establishments in support of farm diversification
<p>Provision of more affordable rural housing provision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of a Borough/County wide action plan to increase the rate of provision of ARH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ LDF – Core Strategy Policy 7 Key Rural Centres: - <i>*To support the provision of mixed,</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll out of a publicity campaign aimed at parish councillors and district planning committee members to explain the benefits of affordable rural housing and its social and economic benefits • Every parish or cluster of parishes to conduct a housing needs survey using a proven and widely accepted approach, and then be responsible for identifying potential sites for affordable housing if local needs are found to exist • Invest in new Community Land Trusts as a mechanism to ensure community involvement, control and responsibility in ARH • HBBC to assess its own estate to release land for the provision of affordable housing to Community Land Trusts • Increased high quality public site provision for gypsy and traveller communities 	<p><i>sustainable communities, a minimum of 2090 affordable homes will be provided in the Borough from 2006 to 2026. At least 480 dwellings will contribute to this target in rural areas, including rural exception sites brought forward via Policy 17 Rural Needs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ LDF – Core Strategy Policy 24 Sustainable Design and Technology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>*Residential developments in key rural centres and rural villages will be expected to meet the sustainable targets set out in Building a Greener Future</i> ○ Home insulations project in the private sector contributing to decent homes ○ Financial assistance available to home owners to improve their properties
<p>Transform existing rural space and buildings to multifunctional use/Accessible services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of support to community groups for the widening of use of existing buildings (e.g. village halls, churches, libraries) • Support for services with multi functional capacity • Mobile Police Units to combine with CAB to offer services in rural communities • Provide indemnity/insurance for local groups organising events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establishment of touch down centres access points across the Borough: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Markfield Sports and Community Centre touchdown point to give people in rural areas additional access to services, satellite site for customer services, internet café enabling the public to access the council's services and information via the intranet. Provision of CAB outreach service. ○ Provision of benefits advice through a home visiting service, reviews also offered at touch down sites across the Borough ○ Targeted campaign to ensure take up of benefit entitlement undertaken, leaflet drops, residents events, drop in centre – all relevant rural areas targeted ○ Expansion of payment outlets specifically enabling more rural outlets. Payments can be made at 17 post offices or 23 paypoint retail

		<p>outlets within the Borough, including Markfield Community Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Housing officer provision (properties, tenancies and repairs) out at rural areas on a daily basis ○ Provision of sheltered housing schemes in rural areas: Ambien Court – Market Bosworth, Mayflower Court – Markfield, Centurian Court – Ratby, St. Giles Close – Barlestone ○ Dedicated street cleansing crews in x 2 rural areas (dedicated equipment/applied sweepers): Northern Parishes and Market Bosworth. Ten week rota of street cleansing specifically benefits rural areas enabling a more regular presence ○ Neighbourhood wardens work in rural areas to identify and resolve all environmental issues in a one stop service ○ Countryside Site improvements increasing access to all HBBC green spaces: Groby Pool Nature Reserve and Car Park; Billa Barra Hill, Stanton under Bardon – new pedestrian entrance, fencing repairs and car park resurfacing; Hillhole Quarry, Markfield – review of grazing arrangements; Manor Farm, Bagworth – new apple trees planted within community orchards; Gopsall Wharf and canal sites – improved maintenance ○ RIEP bid for single access point for young homeless people ○ Children centres established x 6, including Desford ○ Centre stage – a rural and community touring scheme for Leicestershire and Rutland
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		<p>bringing opportunities for live touring performances to villages and communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next generation youth bus 637 a mobile youth facility offering advice and support via youth workers ○ Provision of community transport within priority neighbourhoods, specifically Bagworth & Thornton, to enable elderly/less mobile members of the community to take part in shopping trips to Hinckley, and access advice and support services located in Hinckley e.g. CAB, Age Concern, etc. ○ Customer first, community profiling and soft intelligence hub initiatives all helping to shape services ○ Parish and Community Initiative fund and vibrant villages scheme to develop facilities ○ Community Centre developments at Groby and Bagworth & Thornton
<p>Widen transport options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A scheme for free or reduced bus transport for the 18's and under ● Engage more public support for rural bus provision, and assessment of re-routing options to encompass villages without bus provision ● Establishment of innovative community transport schemes for all areas across the Borough ● Improve the 'roadscape' by introducing speed limiting measures to encourage more cycling, walking and horse-riding on the Borough's lanes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ LDF – Core Strategy Policy 14 Rural Areas Transport - <i>To support accessibility within rural areas the council will:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>*Support the delivery of a viable, high quality public transport network between the key rural centres and their nearest urban centre and between rural villages and their nearest key rural centre or urban centre</i> - <i>*Support the provision of accessible transport services for mobility impaired and rurally isolated residents</i> - <i>*Support the continuation of demand responsive transport networks (shared taxi service, community minibus, rural dial a ride)</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage more moped hire schemes for younger people • Encourage cycling and walking between rural centres by making footpaths and bridleways suitable for every day, year round use; introduce a network of 'inter village routes' that are off-road but surfaced (and possibly lit) in such a way that makes cycling and walking possible at all times • Investigation of electric minibus services for commuters 	<p><i>to villages and hamlets not covered by the hourly services network – Kirby Mallory, Peckleton, Shackerstone, Congerstone, Carlton, Sutton Cheney, Shenton, Kirby Grange, Botcheston</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>*Deliver safe cycle paths to schools, residential and employment areas, key rural centres, community and leisure facilities and into the countryside</i> ○ Cycling guide ○ Concessionary Travel Scheme ○ Green Travel Plan ○ Flexible working/home working policy
<p>Increase use and management of natural green spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An assessment of the Borough's network of public rights of way to create more circular routes, with more linked car parks and public transport routes and amenities, and work with landowners to create permissive circular routes where possible or via planning gain from diversification projects • Make available maps and guides for these routes in attractive publications displayed on line and in the usual information points • Development of schemes to allow young groups of young people to have access to areas of designated rural or farm land to manage nature, rights of way, and other projects on a time limited basis, thus giving children a sense of ownership and pride in their local land • Establish a new generation of community orchards to grow local and traditional fruit varieties in rural villages and market towns • Development of a scheme for farmers to donate land on a temporary basis for allotments for both rural and urban dwellers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ LDF – Core Strategy Policy 20 Green Infrastructure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Green Infrastructure Strategy and PPG17 study sets out the strategic framework for use of green space, <i>*will include an action plan specifying which rural areas are to be developed</i> ○ LDF – Core Strategy Policy 19 Green Space and Play Provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sets out standards in relation to green space and play provision to ensure all residents have access to sufficient, high quality, accessible green spaces and play areas ○ Maintenance of council housing stock green space ○ Local authority allotments and specifically Hill Hole Quarry, Markfield (36 plots) ○ Parish and Community Initiative Fund

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Active Together Walking for Health Schemes: 8 existing schemes and further schemes planned for Summer 2010, include Desford, Ratby, Bosworth ○ Ensuring diversion of footpaths re new developments ○ Legal support re access to common land issues
<p>Secure a Hinckley and Bosworth Food Policy/healthy eating</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Launch of a local authority Food Policy setting out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how local authorities and other public sector bodies can procure local food and thus support local businesses and farmland management - how local produce can be best quality assured to remain attractive to Hinckley and Bosworth buyers - how producers/sectors of the local food economy can obtain local accreditation - a new network of local food trails to encourage local people and tourists to visit local producers and their landscapes and buy direct - continued support for innovations that are already localising food and farming i.e. Schools Food & Farming day, farmers' markets, community orchards, vegetable patches in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Safer food better business program targeted at food proprietors from hard to reach groups ○ Food safety week 09/10 aimed at listeria in older people ○ Farmer's market ○ Children centres healthier eating advice and information ○ LEAP – Lifestyle, Eating and Activity Programme, delivery of local programme ○ Reducing obesity/exercise referral classes in priority neighbourhoods including Bagworth and Thornton ○ Healthy eating/life styles employee initiatives ○ Hand washing initiatives in schools ○ Food hygiene advice to community groups

<p>Schools of both communities and children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement of the Borough's rural primary schools to provide buildings, space and facilities for use by the local community (with assurance that hire charges and insurance obligations are not prohibitive) • Establishment of a programme of green outdoor education in all rural and urban schools using a wide range of green spaces beyond school boundaries • Encourage all schools to provide healthy food education to children, development their own gardens and allotments, and buy local food for their school dinner provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Play strategy developed in consultation with children and partnerships with youth council. Facilities for children on all parks ○ Adoption of Leicestershire and Rutland Strategy for Physical Activity 2009 – 2013, and Leicestershire and Rutland Sports Strategy 2009 – 2013, aimed at increasing levels of participation and reducing health inequalities ○ Engagement in the promotion and delivery of a range of countywide initiatives including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PAYP Positive Activities for Young People (10 -19) funding programme to engage young people, targeted at priority neighbourhoods including Bagworth and Thornton - Step into Sport – developing young people as leaders and volunteers - Sports Unlimited – county sports partnership and local sports alliance, supports clubs and schools to run sports schemes for children and young people - Inclusive Football – a 4 year plan aimed at providing opportunities for all to participate in football for life ○ Working with communities to improve parks – community parks and friends groups ○ Through Community House Projects continue with environmental initiatives aimed at encouraging young people to take pride and respect in their neighbourhoods ○ SPD Play and Open Spaces includes
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		<p>design guidelines for green space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community Safety Partnership has developed a joint Safety Crew project with Blaby District that is commonly delivered in secondary schools ○ Locality Partnership – bespoke schools provision ○ Waste education provision with schools, schools competition e.g. designs for recycling, etc. ○ Recycling provision offered to all schools including rural areas (43 out of 46 take up)
<p>Establish a strategy for young and old/vulnerable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The launch of an intergenerational scheme to support links between young and old e.g. between primary schools and care homes ● Encouragement of Parish Councils to ensure all villages have space where local children can ‘free range’, thus providing incentives to play, be active and socially connect ● Develop a Borough wide health walking scheme for the elderly ● Support dog walking and dog sitting schemes for the elderly ● Develop computer training schemes delivered by the young for the elderly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Free swim initiative under 16’s over 60’s ○ Benefits strategy being reviewed to include ensuring older people’s well-being is at the centre of services ○ Food safety week 09/10 aimed at listeria in older people ○ Physical activity co-ordinator for older persons ○ Through community house projects, Markfield Community Centre support services provided for older people e.g. direct links with age concern, voluntary action and other agencies who deal with the elderly e.g. PRIDE alarm scheme, safety at home scheme, adult education, healthier life styles, community groups and activities specifically for the elderly ○ First contact initiative for older people to be

		<p>rolled out in the Borough</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reviewing all benefits policies to ensure the needs of all communities are taken into account ○ Home visits to elderly re claims for housing and council tax ○ Promotion of availability of benefits and advice surgeries held at locations most frequented by the elderly. ○ Rent collection service available to elderly and infirm tenants ○ Bereavement visits carried out when one member of a couple passes away, to assist in completion of claims ○ Appointment of an Older Persons Manager ○ Establishment of older persons strategy driven by older persons champion lead member ○ Citizens panel demographically reflects the make up of the Borough ○ Embedding First Contact Project and development of a 'Safe at Home' scheme to provide crime prevention and protection for elderly and other vulnerable people ○ Disabled facilities Grant available and adaptations carried out to council properties ○ 'Take up strategy' to maximise the income of older people, also aimed at people of working age
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development of a specific policy re Vulnerable Adults ○ Through housing case work vulnerable adults referred to appropriate agencies ○ Provision of sheltered accommodation schemes in rural areas: Ambian Court – Market Bosworth, Mayflower Court – Markfield, Centurian Court – Ratby, St. Giles Close – Barlestone ○ Supported lodging scheme for young homeless people ○ Homelessness prevention work helping people to remain in their localities by sourcing private rented accommodation, providing linkages with home locality if local accommodation not sourced ○ Provision of a mediation scheme to support young people back into their family home ○ RIEP bid for single access point for young homeless people ○ Provision of lifelines from control centres to people in both urban and rural areas ○ Support for the development and delivery of an annual older voices forum and annual over 50's event ○ Assisted collections waste management ○ Easy access service for apartments and flats re waste collection
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Age concern and VAHB are represented on the community safety partnership to enable a voice from the elderly, disabled and other vulnerable groups ○ Bosworth Safety Forum inter generation project 'say hello' campaign with all parishes, to tackle perceptions of older and young people ○ Establishment of youth champions in all Parishes via Youth Council ○ Re-launch of Community Relations Forum – specific engagement/focus on vulnerable people in rural areas ○ Extension of Neighbourhood Watch SuperStrength to Desford, Peckleton, Newbold Verdon, Bagworth and Thornton ○ Positive Action for Young People provision at Markfield Community Centre, mini bus pick ups from Bagworth, Thornton, Ratby, Groby to Markfield Community Centre ○ Engagement and consultation through County Youth Council for Leicestershire (CYCLE), Hinckley and Bosworth Youth Council, Schools Council, etc. ○ Introduction of Safer Homes Scheme aimed at vulnerable people picked up through 'first contact' scheme, WISK, domestic violence service, etc. for assessment of need and referral ○ Joint Action Groups operational at Bosworth,
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		<p>Markfield, Groby, Stanton and Ratby</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Equalities scheme ○ HBBC strategy for young people
<p>Build community well-being, volunteering, and engaged decision making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The launch of a Borough wide volunteering scheme (targeted especially at the out-of-work and elderly) to build and strengthen village institutions • A return to proper rural policing with every community in having a designated officer with the appropriate skills and knowledge (one officer in charge of a small number of villages) • All parish councils encouraged to complete village design statements or parish plans to assess all aspects of community well-being, including a Community Landscape Character Statement dealing with the settlement's surroundings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community engagement approaches: citizens panel, focus groups with hard to reach, budget setting focus groups, community forums, participatory budgeting, youth council ○ Annual consultation via citizens panel in relation to street scene and waste collection ○ Quarterly surveys as follow up to customers who have contacted us re street scene and waste collection, to gain feedback on how we have dealt with their enquiry/issue ○ Regular surveys on service provision via Borough Bulletin circulation to all households in the Borough ○ Plain English campaign and establishment of a Plain English panel ○ Housing services planning a comprehensive programme of community consultation and engagement for 2010/11, to establish tenants needs, tenant profiling, and specifically to inform accessibility of services for those in rural areas ○ Website online development to enable access to information and consultation ○ Engagement of and support to volunteers via

		<p>Voluntary Action Leicestershire and through our local Hinckley and Bosworth Community Hub</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engagement of all parish council representatives via a twice yearly Parishes Forum meeting ○ Postal voting promotion to encourage take up, and review of poll stations re accessibility ○ Management of electoral registration and elections ○ Ongoing encouragement to Parish Councils to prepare parish plans for their village leading to Village Design Statements ○ Annual Grant to Rural Communities Council to facilitate a P/T community development officer to support community engagement in targeted rural areas ○ Establishment of a local resilience forum, and support x 6 Flood Wardens in Sheepy, Shenton and Witherley re flooding advice ○ Priority neighbourhoods V project ○ Social capital survey ○ Community consultation via community houses ○ Delivery of Participatory Budgeting ○ Working with communities to improve parks – community parks and friends groups
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support to volunteers with litter picking allowing parishes to identify hot spots for clean ups with the Probation Service ○ Neighbourhood Watch SuperStrength project to be expanded in priority and rural areas of the Borough to strengthen community engagement and consultation ○ Priority Neighbourhoods (including Bagworth & Thornton) patch walks, community questionnaires, residents consultation meetings, to inform Neighbourhood Action Teams and Plans ○ Neighbourhood wardens work with probation service to make environmental improvements to neighbourhoods. Friends group at Manor Farm Bagworth, and Burbage Common, clean ups with neighbourhood wardens. ○ The Borough has introduced Street Pastors volunteers to assist with the tackling of the night time economy ○ Links with local schools to include them in volunteering in environmental improvements ○ Volunteering policy HBBC ○ Voluntary peer mentoring scheme within key secondary schools in the Borough where young volunteers have been trained to mentor other pupils who have alcohol misuse problems ○ We engage the Borough's youth council in volunteering. Members currently involved in supporting our fortnightly alcohol free disco
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		<p>night for young people, test purchasing by under age children with Trading Standards, providing a street scene dance on the consequences of alcohol misuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Voluntary opportunities for young offenders to undertake work in the community as part of 'community pay back.' Opportunities promoted at Community Safety consultation meetings to encourage Parishes to consider the scheme. Such work undertaken in Markfield, Stoke Golding, Burbage, Earl Shilton, Peckleton, Bagworth and Thornton ○ Volunteer opportunities via annual programme of events ○ Engaged staff at National Grid and Caterpillar to do voluntary work at our community houses and other crime and disorder locations including decorating and garden improvements
<p>Establishment of a Hinckley and Bosworth Energy Policy/Energy Efficiency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establishment of an independent energy advisory service to advise on the most efficient energy generation and conservation schemes in private homes and in public institutions ● Support for the establishment of fuel oil rings within parishes or parish clusters to reduce the price of fuel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leisure centre metering project Greenfield's variable speed drives/pool covers/LED, high frequency lighting at Leisure Centre ○ Installation of energy monitoring system in key council buildings and reduction measures taken ○ Core strategy policy dealing with Code for Sustainable Homes ○ Review of council fleet contract to ensure energy efficient vehicles specified ○ Reviewing waste collection routes as part of current consultation process

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recycling of green waste provision ○ Review of rural rounds to minimise mileage and drop off points ○ Utilisation of local processors for waste recycling disposal ○ Bio-diesel used in council fleet ○ Core strategy policy to improve bio-diversity ○ Energy conservation officer attends local groups to promote energy efficiency options ○ Establishment of a carbon management plan to ensure energy efficiency for our social housing stock ○ Promotion and support to the community and community groups re the Big Switch Off Campaign 2009 ○ Support for development of Eco Schools ○ Utilisation of no peat/peat tree compost ○ Utilisation of environmentally sensitive pesticides ○ Sustainable energy measures installed to heat Burbage Common Visitor Centre – ground heat recovery unit ○ Home insulation project contributing to decent homes standard ○ Financial assistance available to home owners
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		<p>to improve their properties, e.g. upgrade of boilers, heaters, insulation, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leicestershire County Council's SHIRE Community Climate Change Grants to help communities to plan and implement projects to improve energy efficiency and help offset some of the anticipated impacts of climate change.
<p>Nature Wilderness/Wildlife/ National Forest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued support and protection of the landscapes, habitats and ecosystems of rural areas that provide the Borough's unique character and identity • Assessment of the economic value of the ecosystem services (for example, flood protection, pollination, carbon sequestration, amenity) provided by the natural and semi natural habitats, and thus an improved understanding of their value to the people and economy of the Borough • Collaboration with the Wildlife Trust and other conservation agencies to improve biodiversity status of all flora and fauna (including species introductions and revitalization, habitat connectivity and resilience, conservation and protection) • The establishment with CAB of a training programme for parish clerks and elected councillors to become qualified advisers and village agents • Promotion of the value of wild/rural areas and its biodiversity, tranquillity and rural character on a national stage as a national destination – national forest? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ LDF – Core Strategy Policy 21: National Forest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>*To support the implementation of the National Forest to the north east of the Borough including increasing woodland cover, enhancing bio diversity, developing a new woodland economy for timber products and wood fuel energy, outdoor recreational and sports provision, and tourism developments</i> ○ Countryside Site improvements increasing access to all HBBC green spaces: Groby Pool Nature Reserve and Car Park; Billa Barra Hill, Stanton under Bardon – new pedestrian entrance, fencing repairs and car park resurfacing; Hillhole Quarry, Markfield – review of grazing arrangements; Manor Farm, Bagworth – new apple trees planted within community orchards; Gopsall Wharf and canal sites – improved maintenance ○ Enhancement of existing habitats (green space strategy) e.g. development of hillhole quarry nature reserve, etc.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Council's Environmental Improvement budget○ Conservation Area Appraisal being undertaken○ Information panels on wildlife sites and environmental educational activities at Burbage Common○ <i>*PPG17 study being undertaken re use of green and open spaces</i>○ Represented on countywide panel for the designation of wildlife sites○ Provision tree preservation orders and tree maintenance advice
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SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 20 MAY 2010

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE DIRECTION)
RE: PETITION SCHEME

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of the new requirements for petitions and to present a proposed Petition Scheme.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Scrutiny Commission

- (i) endorses the Petition Scheme prior to approval by Council;
- (ii) supports the provision of an online petition facility from October 2010;
- (ii) RECOMMENDS that the Council's Constitution be amended to reflect the new scheme.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

3.1 The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 requires every local authority from 15 June 2010 to have adopted a petition scheme which sets out how it will handle petitions. By 15 December 2010, every local authority must have an online petition facility ('E-petitions') under which anyone may set up a petition on the authority's website, and other petitioners may 'sign' the petition online.

3.2 The attached scheme sets out the provision for petitions including guidelines for submitting a petition, timescales for acknowledgement and publication of received and validated petitions, the process for dealing with a petition, actions that may be taken, request for review and provision for E-petitions.

3.3 The main provisions of the new scheme to bring to Members' attention are:

- A petition must consist of more than 20 signatures to be defined as a petition and must not be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate;
- A petition can ask for a senior officer to give evidence at a public meeting, and if more than 750 signatures are received the relevant officer (Strategic Leadership Board member or Chief Officer) will be required to give evidence at a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission;
- If a petition contains more than 2,000 signatures it will be debated in Council.

3.4 The scheme also includes the arrangements for E-petitions. This facility will be hosted on the Council's website and whilst the Act requires that it be available from 15 December 2010, it is anticipated that it will be live in this

authority in October 2010 to coincide with Local Democracy Week. The E-petitions site is currently being developed by the Council's IT provider alongside the development of the Council's website.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (DM)**

There are no financial implications directly from this report. The petition facility will be set online on the authority's website as part of the Website Development Project and there is a budget provision set aside for the project.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (AB)**

Contained in the body of the report.

6. **CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

The recommendations contained in this report contribute to the aim of Strong and Distinctive Communities by improving customer access to services and by encouraging participation in local democracy.

7. **CONSULTATION**

There is no duty to consult on the scheme by this authority; however a response was submitted by this Council to the DCLG consultation on Draft Statutory Guidance on the duty to respond to petitions.

8. **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 / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
1. Non-compliance with legislation	Timely agreement to scheme by Council	Louisa Horton
2. E-petitions being unavailable by the required date	Development of site in-house to ensure accountability	Louisa Horton

9. **KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Petition Scheme and particularly the E-petition provision will improve access to services and will provide a process for all groups in the Borough to request action or information on matters of concern.

10. **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

The following have been taken into account:

- Community Safety implications: None
- Environmental implications: The E-petition facility will reduce paper usage
- ICT implications: The E-petition facility will improve electronic communication, however a level of resource is necessary in development of the site
- Asset Management implications: None
- Human Resources implications: Minimal human resource implications in administration of the site and management of the scheme
- Planning Implications: None
- Voluntary Sector: None

Background papers: Local Democracy, Economic Development and
 Construction Act 2009
 Statutory Guidance on Duty to Respond to Petitions

Contact Officer: Rebecca Owen, ext 5879
 Adam Bottomley, ext 5621



Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Petition Scheme

The council welcomes petitions and recognises that petitions are one way in which you can let us know your concerns. We will acknowledge all petitions sent or presented to the council within 10 working days of receipt. This acknowledgement will set out what we plan to do with the petition. We will treat something as a petition if it has twenty or more signatories and is either identified as being a petition, or it seems to us that it is intended to be a petition. You can submit a petition in paper format which should be sent to:

Democratic Services
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Council Offices
Argents Mead
Hinckley
LE10 1BZ

Alternatively as of October 2010 you will be able to create, sign and submit petitions online by following this link [E-petitions](#). If your petition has received 2000 signatures or more it will be scheduled for a council debate.

What are the guidelines for submitting a petition?

Petitions submitted to the council must include:

- a clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition and what action the petitioners wish the council to take
- the name and address and signature of any person supporting the petition.

Petitions should be accompanied by contact details, including a postal address, for the petition organiser. This is the person we will contact to explain how we will respond to the petition. The contact details of the petition organiser will not be placed on the website. If the petition does not identify a petition organiser, we will contact the first ten signatories to the petition to agree who should act as the petition organiser.

Petitions which are considered to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate will not be accepted. In the period immediately before an election or referendum, we may need to deal with your petition differently – if this is the case we will explain the reasons and discuss the revised timescale which will apply. If your petition does not follow the guidelines set out above, the council may decide not to do anything further with it. In this case, we will write to you to explain the reasons.

What will the council do when it receives my petition?

An acknowledgement will be sent to the petition organiser within 10 working days of receiving the petition. It will let you know what we plan to do with the petition and when they can expect to hear from us again. Details of the petition will also be published on our website.

If we can do what your petition asks for, the acknowledgement may confirm that we have taken the action requested and the petition will be closed. If the petition has enough signatures to trigger a council debate or a senior officer giving evidence (see below), the acknowledgment will confirm this and tell you when and where the meeting will take place. If the petition needs more investigation, we will tell you the steps we plan to take.

If the petition applies to a planning or licensing application, is a statutory petition (for example requesting a referendum on having an elected mayor), or on a matter where there is already an existing right of appeal, such as council tax banding and non-domestic rates, other procedures apply. If the petition alleges misconduct by a councillor it will be treated as a complaint under the Code of Conduct and it will be passed to the Monitoring Officer. Further information on all these procedures and how you can express your views is available on the council's website.

We will not take action on any petition which we consider to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate and will explain the reasons for this in our acknowledgement of the petition.

To ensure that people know what we are doing in response to the petitions we receive, the details of all the petitions submitted to us and the action taken in response to them will be published on our website, except in cases where this would be inappropriate. Whenever possible, we will also publish all correspondence relating to the petition (all personal details will be removed).

How will the council respond to your petition?

Our response to your petition will depend on what the petition asks for and how many people have signed it. It may include one or more of the following:

- taking the action requested in the petition
- considering the petition at a council meeting
- holding an inquiry into the matter
- undertaking research into the matter
- holding a public meeting
- holding a consultation
- holding a meeting with petitioners
- referring the petition for consideration by the council's Scrutiny Commission¹
- calling a referendum
- writing to the petition organiser setting out our views about the request.

In addition to these steps, the council will consider any other appropriate actions it can potentially take on the issues highlighted in a petition.

If your petition is about something over which the council has no direct control (for example the local railway or hospital) we will consider making representations on behalf of the community to the relevant body. The council works with a large number of local partners through the Local Strategic Partnership and where possible we will work with these partners to respond to your petition. If we are not able to do this for any reason (for example if what the petition calls for conflicts with council policy), then we will set out the reasons for this to you.

You can find more information on the services for which the council is responsible here [Council Services](#).

If your petition is about something that a different council is responsible for we will give consideration to what the best method is for responding to it. This might consist of simply forwarding the petition to the other council, but could involve other steps. In any event we will always notify you of the action we have taken.

Council debates

If your petition contains more than 2,000 signatures it will be debated by councillors at the next convenient meeting of the council unless it is a petition asking for a senior council officer to give evidence at a public meeting. This means that the issue raised in the petition will be discussed at a meeting which all councillors can attend.

You will be given three minutes to present the petition at the meeting and the petition will then be discussed by councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes. If more than one qualifying petition has been received they will be discussed in the order they were received by the council unless the Mayor decides to change the order.

The council will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. They may decide to take the action the petition requests, not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or to commission further investigation into the

matter, for example by a relevant committee. Where the issue is one on which the Executive² is required to make the final decision, the council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision. Whatever the decision, you will receive written confirmation of it. This confirmation will also be published on our website.

Officer evidence

Your petition may ask for a senior council officer to give evidence at a public meeting about something for which the officer is responsible as part of their job. For example, your petition may ask a senior council officer to explain progress on an issue, or to explain the advice given to elected members to enable them to make a particular decision. If your petition contains at least 750 signatures, the relevant senior officer will give evidence at a public meeting of the council's Scrutiny Commission. The senior staff that can be called to give evidence are:

- The Chief Executive
- The Deputy Chief Executive (Community Direction)
- The Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Direction)(S151 Officer)
- The Chief Officer (Housing, Community Safety and Partnerships)
- The Chief Officer (Environmental Health)
- The Chief Officer (Transformation)
- The Chief Officer (Business, Contract and Streetscene Services)
- The Chief Officer (Corporate and Customer Resources, Scrutiny and Ethical Standards)(Monitoring Officer).

You should be aware that the Scrutiny Commission may decide that it would be more appropriate for another officer to give evidence instead of any officer named in the petition – for instance if the named officer has changed jobs. The committee may also decide to call on a relevant councillor to attend the meeting. You will be able to propose questions to be put to the Officer in question up to three days before the meeting by contacting Democratic Services but these will be asked by the Commission Members.

E-petitions

The council welcomes e-petitions which are created and submitted through the e-petitions section of our website [link]. E-petitions must follow the same guidelines as paper petitions. As the petition organiser you will need to provide us with your name, postal address and email address. You will also need to decide how long you would like your petition to be open for signatures. Most petitions run for six months, but you can choose timeframes of 1, 3, 6 or 12 months.

When you create an e-petition, it may take seven days before it is published online. This is because we have to check that the content of your petition is suitable before it is made available for signature. If we feel we cannot publish your petition for some reason, we will contact you within this time to explain. You will then have an opportunity to change and resubmit your petition if you wish. If you do not do this

within 14 days, a summary of the petition and the reason why it has not been accepted will be published under the 'rejected petitions' section of the website.

When an e-petition has closed for signature, it will automatically be submitted to Democratic Services. In the same way as a paper petition, you will receive an acknowledgement within 14 days of submission.

How do I 'sign' an e-petition?

You can see all the e-petitions currently available for signature in the e-petitions section of our website.

When you sign an e-petition you will be asked to provide your name, a valid email address and your postcode and if you live in the borough or the name of your employer or college if you work or study in the borough. When you have submitted this information you will be sent an email to the email address you have provided. This email will include a link which you must click on in order to confirm the email address is valid. Once this step is complete your 'signature' will be added to the petition. People visiting the e-petition will be able to see your name in the list of those who have signed it but your contact details will not be visible.

What can I do if I feel my petition has not been dealt with properly?

If you feel that we have not dealt with your petition properly, you, as the petition organiser, have the right to request that the council's Scrutiny Commission reviews the steps that the council has taken in response to your petition. It is helpful to everyone and can improve the prospects for a review if you give a short explanation of the reasons why the council's response is not considered to be adequate. The Commission will consider your request at the next convenient meeting. Should the Commission determine we have not dealt with your petition adequately, it may use any of its powers to deal with the matter. These powers include instigating an investigation, making recommendations to the Executive and arranging for the matter to be considered at a meeting of the Council. Once the appeal has been considered you will be informed of the results within seven days. The results of the review will also be published on our website.

¹The Scrutiny Commission is a committee of councillors who are responsible for scrutinising the work of the council – in other words, the Scrutiny Commission has the power to hold the council's decision makers to account

² The Executive is a committee consisting of the Leader of the Council and up to nine other councillors which carry's out the functions of the local authority which are not the responsibility of any other part of the authority



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

Overview and Scrutiny

ANNUAL REPORT
2009/2010

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FOREWORD by the Scrutiny Chairman and Vice-Chairmen



Councillor M Lay
Chairman of Scrutiny Commission



Councillor Mrs R Camamile
Vice Chairman of Scrutiny
Commission and Chairman of
Council Services Select
Committee



Councillor P Hall
Vice Chairman of Scrutiny
Commission and Chairman of
Finance and Audit Services Select
Committee

Welcome to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's sixth Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report. We hope that our Annual Report will:

- raise the profile of scrutiny among councillors, officers and the public;
- provide a greater understanding of the role and benefit of scrutiny;
- provide awareness of the role of scrutiny in developing policy and improving performance;
- allow for more effective scrutiny of Executive decisions;

We have an effective overview and scrutiny function that contributes towards the work of the council and its vision. We manage and prioritise the work of overview and scrutiny function through the use of an annual work programme, this also allows the effective 'tracking' of previous decisions. We have received the Forward Plan at each meeting of the Scrutiny Commission, which has assisted us with monitoring the work of the Executive and in many cases has enabled us to be proactive during the policy development stage.

The scrutiny commission continues cross-party working and applies a 'critical friend' approach to scrutiny. An opposition member is chair and has been highly commended by the Centre for Public Scrutiny for his innovative and creative approach to chairing the commission. The Commission has a dedicated research budget and officer support.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank fellow Scrutiny Councillors and Executive members for their support and commitment. We would also like to thank officers for their support and hard work. We look forward to building further on our success in the coming year.

Councillor Matthew Lay

Chairman of Scrutiny Commission

Councillor Ruth Camamile

Vice Chairman of Scrutiny Commission and Chairman of Council Services Select Committee

Councillor Peter Hall

Vice Chairman of Scrutiny Commission and Chairman of Finance and Audit Services Select Committee

INTRODUCTION TO THE ROLE OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Role of Overview and Scrutiny

The objectives of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function are to:

- provide 'critical friend' challenge to the Executive as well as external authorities and agencies;
- reflect the voice and concerns of our public and our communities;
- lead and own the scrutiny process on behalf of the public; and
- make an impact on the delivery of public services.

The above objectives are the "Successful Scrutiny Criteria" adopted as best practice by the Centre for Public Scrutiny and is used to report achievement in this report.

Further details of the role of scrutiny and the terms of reference for the Scrutiny Commission and the Select Committees are contained in Part 2 Article 6 of the Council's Constitution.

The Structure of Overview and Scrutiny

The Council appoints a Scrutiny Commission, made up of 15 non-executive councillors from all political groups, to ensure the smooth operation of overview and scrutiny and to ensure the Leader of the Council and the Executive is held to account.

The Scrutiny Commission is supported in its role by two permanent select committees:

- Council Services; and
- Finance and Audit Services.

The Scrutiny Commission and Select Committees are also supported by working groups/task groups, during the past year these included:

- ICT Panel;
- Scrutiny Environment Group;
- Barwell and Earl Shilton Scrutiny Group;
- LDS Scrutiny Group;
- Civic Facilities Scrutiny Group;
- Constitution Working Group;
- Affordable Housing Working Group.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

In November 2005, the Scrutiny Commission reviewed progress of the Overview and Scrutiny Function and in line with best practice, the council's effective scrutiny criteria was refined in line with the principles of Centre for Public Scrutiny's effective scrutiny criteria. The following highlights our achievements under each Principle.

1. PROVIDE 'CRITICAL FRIEND' CHALLENGE TO THE EXECUTIVE AS WELL AS EXTERNAL AUTHORITIES AND AGENCIES

Our Achievements this year include:

- Monitored **annual and monthly capital and revenue outturn** reports the Statement of Accounts and Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- Considered the **General Fund Budget Strategy**, ensuring the Council maintains a strong financial position;
- Reviewed the **Housing Revenue Account Subsidy** and made recommendations
- Monitored the progress of the **Earl Shilton and Barwell Urban Extension Masterplan**
- Provided input into allocation of the **Housing & Planning Delivery Grant**
- Monitored the situation with regard to **concessionary travel**
- Undertook a review of the service provided by **Registered Social Landlords**

2. REFLECT THE VOICE AND CONCERNS OF OUR PUBLIC AND OUR COMMUNITIES

Our Achievements this year include:

- Approved and monitored a **Borough Wide Anti Poverty Strategy**
- Provided input to **the Local Development Framework**
- Questioned the **Combined Fire Authority** over proposed changes to services at Hinckley Fire Station
- Led on the development of a **Credit Union** for Hinckley & Bosworth
- Led a review of **Registered Social Landlords**

3. LEAD AND OWN THE SCRUTINY PROCESS ON BEHALF OF THE PUBLIC

Our Achievements this year include:

- **Actively managed** the Overview and Scrutiny Function Work Programme
- Utilised the **£5,000 research and development** fund of the overview and scrutiny function
- Carried out a **Rural Areas Review**
- Continued to act as formal consultee in the **Community Healthcare Review**
- Agreed a procedure to address **Councillors' calls for action**
- Continued monitoring the performance of the **Community Safety Partnership**
- Supported the **Extended Services Strategy for Children & Young People** for Hinckley & Bosworth

4. MAKE AN IMPACT ON THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Our Achievements this year include:

- Undertook a focussed and detailed performance **scrutiny of key front line service areas**, including: street cleansing; Housing repairs and capital and revenue budgets; Planning and Enforcement appeals
- Continued to monitor progress with the development of people management policies and strategies as the Council moves to **Flexible Working**
- Reviewed **Performance against our stated objectives** in the Corporate Performance Plan and against our key Performance Indicators
- Reviewed the process of **developer contributions** to maximise the impact on improving public facilities
- Reviewed the **disabled adaptations** service.

SELECT COMMITTEES AND PANELS

COUNCIL SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

This year the Council Services Select Committee has delivered its planned work programme, which has enabled us to successfully follow up our recommendations and track improvements in performance.

We are keen to ensure that the Council's key services, which affect the quality of life of the Borough's residents, are continuing to improve and that an appropriate balance is struck between quality and cost.

Our Achievements this year include:

- Monitoring Sickness absence resulting in a dramatic reduction in the number of days per employee to 7.8 days
- Proactively monitored and scrutinised the Performance Management Framework
- Received front line reports from Streetscene services, Grounds Maintenance, Neighbourhood Wardens, Environmental Health, Housing, Planning, Leisure Centre and Revenues and Benefits
- Actively monitored performance against the Corporate Objectives contained in the Corporate Plan with regard to Housing
- Reviewed the impact of void council housing and commercial properties;
- Undertook an annual review of the Children and Young People's Strategy;
- Considered and made recommendations for alternative methods of making payments to the council.

FINANCE AND AUDIT SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

Finance and Audit Services Select Committee aims to constructively challenge and investigate the financial stability, probity in corporate governance and full consideration of risks, so that the Council is better placed to face future challenges.

During the year the Finance & Audit Services Select Committee has considered and reviewed a number of matters relating to the financial affairs of the Council.

As in previous years the Select Committee has provided “back-bench” input into the major financial processes of the Council considering the following matters:

- Statement of Accounts
- Review of Revenue and Capital Outturn
- Capital Programme
- Revenue Budget
- Council Tax proposals
- External Auditors ISA 260 letter
- Annual Audit and Inspection Letter
- Quarterly Budget Monitoring
- Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Policy
- Investment Returns
- Internal Audit plan and reports
- Data Quality Assessments
- Risk Management Framework
- Corporate Governance Statement
- Budget adjustments
- Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Select Committee also received copies of all Internal Audit reports and reviewed the level of Internal Control Assurance that could be derived from each area under audit and monitored the recommendations.

The Select Committee also requested a number of reports on specific areas of concern including

- Housing revenue account
- Hinckley Town Centre regeneration support project
- Town Centre Masterplan
- Commercial Estates Review
- International Financial Reporting Standards
- Cost of plastics & cardboard recycling

FUTURE CHALLENGES FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Business of Overview and Scrutiny

There are a number of ways through which Overview and Scrutiny can carry out its business, which can be constantly developed and utilised, these include:

- conducting research and other consultation to assist with the analysis of possible options;
- encouraging and enhancing community participation in the development of Council policy; and
- liaising with other organisations operating in the area, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working.

Scrutiny is not restricted in the way it carries out the above tasks, it may:

- hold inquiries;
- appoint advisers and assessors;
- make site visits;
- conduct public surveys;
- hold public meetings; and
- commission research.

Call-in

The Council's Executive Portfolio Holders and Chief Officers are required to take decisions based on principles set out in Article 13 of the Council's Constitution. Scrutiny has a role monitoring these decisions and should a scrutiny body or an individual Councillor believe that these principles have not been followed then they have 7 working days from the publication of the decision to "call-in" that decision for further discussion by Scrutiny.

Scrutiny can review the decision, the advice given and the process used for making the decision, e.g. consultation, procedure etc. and if it believes that errors were made in the decision making process it can request that Executive reconsiders the decision or that the decision is considered by full Council.

Councillor Call For Action

This new initiative will enable the Commission to take on individual Ward issues to improve things for the public influencing the Executive and Partners to push solutions.

Overview and Scrutiny and Community Leadership

"Overview and Scrutiny is a key mechanism by which a Council can give life to its Community Leadership role and develop imaginative approaches to the use of the well-being power" (ODPM Development of Overview and Scrutiny in Local Government, September 2002). Scrutiny can engage partners and citizens in the work of the Council and find imaginative ways of researching and consulting.

In addition, Scrutiny is able to use these techniques to monitor and evaluate issues of local concern that fall outside the Council's powers. There are wide ranging provisions to engage with other public bodies, especially relating to health and public safety but also with the voluntary and private sectors. This power gives scrutiny a unique position in terms of being able to inform policy decisions and co-ordinate partnership working on projects, which are important to the Borough as a whole but responsibility for them falls to a wide range of organisations.

Engaging with the Public

The Overview and Scrutiny Function needs to improve its dialogue with the public to ensure that future scrutiny is focussed on the needs and views of the public.

Medium/Long term direction of Overview and Scrutiny

Just as the Council has to look to the medium and long term when planning its business, Overview and Scrutiny needs to be aware of future development and future direction.

The local government white paper has a range of proposals for strengthening overview and scrutiny including:

- to ensure more powerful local leaders are accountable
- more powers to scrutinise other public bodies and require them to attend,
- provide information and respond to recommendations
- encouragement to set up "area" Overview & Scrutiny Commissions
- encouragement to be more strategic & focus on Local Area Agreements

The scrutiny commission will consider its implications as part of its development.

DEVELOPING A WORK PROGRAMME

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.

It is important that officers and members see scrutiny as an integral part of the day job and not an unwelcome "bolt on" which they have no capacity to absorb. The Work Programme, contained as part of this Annual Report, will assist Heads of Service/managers with identifying when to provide reports and information to scrutiny and when to attend.

A work programme for Scrutiny is key to ensuring that Scrutiny's work is:

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

The Work Programme is designed to dovetail into the Annual Report.

The Work Programme must have regard to:-

- Cabinet Forward plan
- Best Value Review Programme
- Current local issues
- Corporate and Service Planning Framework
- Performance Management Framework
- Local Strategic Partnership themes
- The Plans of other organisations.

Time will need to be allocated for dealing with call-in. However, the Forward Plan is used to programme items for policy development and policy review.

The Work Programme has been designed to ensure it is:

- a living document and reviewed at each meeting;
- a management tool not a strait jacket;
- not restricted to just one year, although it is recognised that it is good practice to set out the forthcoming year in some detail, when reviews/work is identified for subsequent years there is provision for this to be included.

The Scrutiny Commission will need to use the Work Programme to decide how many task and finish panels are needed to deliver the programmed. For example, task and finish panels could review and monitor the development of new policies, or scrutinise projects which have missed/likely to miss a target, or decide in advance to track the progress of a small number of key projects.

The Scrutiny Commission this year agreed a set of questions to be considered prior to the adoption of a Work Programme:

- Which issues should be included in the Work Programme?
- How will implementation of the Council's Vision and Improvement Plan be monitored?
- How will Performance Information be received?
- What involvement will there be in the Corporate Planning/budget process?
- How will the Council scrutinise external bodies?
- How will we engage partners and members of the public in the scrutiny process?
- What work will be carried out by the Commission, select committees and task and finish panels and what resource implications will this have?

CONTACTS

Scrutiny Commission, its Panels and Select Committees are directly supported by the Corporate & Customer Resources, Scrutiny & Ethical Standards service, which has responsibility for Scrutiny planning, improvement and research support as well as member development and committee support.

For more information concerning Scrutiny please contact

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A Borough to be proud of

Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/2011

ISSUE 2010/01: MAY 2010

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 2010/2011.

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 sixth 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 2010/2011

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 2009 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.

-

5.

6.

7. Community Safety Partnership

- Six-monthly report on progress of Partnership

8.

-

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

TIMETABLE

Scrutiny Commission - Thursday 20 May 2010						
Function	Activity/ Objective	Reason	Desired Outcome	Vision and Aims	Responsible (member/officer)	External Involvement
Scrutiny Topics	Question and Answer session with the Leader & Deputy Leader	To ascertain the future direction and beliefs of the Executive	Scrutiny of the Executive	All Corporate Aims	Leader and Deputy Leader of Council	
	Review of Housing Associations	Formulate recommendations				
	Community Health Services					
	Gritting					
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/ Head of Corporate & Scrutiny Services	
	Petitions Scheme					

Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations	Rural areas review	Review progress against previous recommendations		Strong and distinctive communities	Executive Member for Rural Affairs	
Committee Management Issues	Work Programme	Review work load for the year	Agreed forward work programme	All Corporate Aims	Head of Corporate & Scrutiny Services	

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Scrutiny Commission - Thursday 1 July 2010						
Function	Activity/ Objective	Reason	Desired Outcome	Vision, Values and Aims	Responsible (member/officer)	External Involvement
Scrutiny Topics						
Performance Management Information	Planning Appeal Decisions	6-monthly review	Ensure high performance of Planning Committee	All Corporate Aims	Director of Community & Planning Services	
	End of year performance & risk					
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 Review	6 monthly update	Reduction in crime and improved partnership working	Safer and Healthier Borough	Executive member for Community safety Deputy Chief Executive	
	Developer Contributions update	Update progress since previous report (January 09)	Monitoring of section 106 contributions	Strong and distinctive communities	Executive Member for Planning / Director of Community and Planning Services	
Committee Management Issues	Work Programme	Review work load for the year	Agreed forward work programme	All Corporate Aims	Head of Corporate & Scrutiny Services	

Scrutiny Commission - Thursday 5 August 2010						
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		

Scrutiny Commission - Thursday 16 September 2010						
Function	Activity/ Objective	Reason	Desired Outcome	Vision, Values and Aims	Responsible (member/officer)	External Involvement
Scrutiny Topics	Review of Member Development	Annual review: Scrutiny of activities and strategy	Ensure value for money training and development and assess progress towards achieving Member Development Charter	All Corporate Aims	Head of Corporate & Scrutiny Services / Member Development Champion	
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		

Scrutiny Commission - Thursday 28 October 2010						
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		

Scrutiny Commission - Thursday 9 December 2010						
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		

Scrutiny Commission - Thursday 20 January 2011						
Function	Activity/ Objective	Reason	Desired Outcome	Vision, Values and Aims	Responsible (member/officer)	External Involvement
Scrutiny Topics	Planning Appeal Decisions	6-monthly review	Ensure high performance of Planning Committee		Director of Community & Planning Services	
Performance Management Information	Budget???					
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	Developer Contributions update	Update progress since previous report (July 09)	Monitoring of section 106 contributions	Strong and distinctive communities	Executive Member for Planning / Director of Community and Planning Services	
	Community Safety Partnership Review	6-monthly update	Reduction in crime	Safer and Healthier Borough	Executive member for Community safety Deputy Chief Executive	
Committee Management Issues	Work Programme	Review work load for the year	Agreed forward work programme	All Corporate Aims		

Scrutiny Commission - Thursday 10 March 2011						
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		

Scrutiny Commission - Thursday 14 April 2011						
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	
	Parish & Community Initiative Fund	Consider proposed distribution of funding	Recommendations to Executive	Strong & Distinctive Communities	Executive Member for Rural Areas / Deputy Chief Executive	
	Housing & Planning Delivery Grant	Review allocation of and unsuccessful projects	Improved service delivery resulting from grant	All Corporate Aims	Executive Member for Planning / Director of Community & Planning Services	
Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations	Rural areas review	Review progress against previous recommendations		Strong and distinctive communities	Executive Member for Rural Affairs	
Committee Management Issues	Work Programme	Review work load for the year	Agreed forward work programme	All Corporate Aims		

WORK PROGRAMMES FOR THE SELECT COMMITTEES WILL BE INCLUDED WHEN AGREED

DRAFT



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

A Borough to be proud of

FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL DECISIONS

MAY – AUGUST 2010

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 MAY TO 31 AUGUST 2010

MAY 2010

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 (Report Author)
Review of Housing Allocations Policy	Housing	Executive 12 May 2010	Scrutiny Commission		Committee Report (<i>Sharon Stacey</i>)

JUNE 2010

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 (Report Author)
Petitions Scheme	Corporate	Council 1 June 2010			Committee Report (<i>Rebecca Owen</i>)
LDF	Planning	Council 1 June 2010			Committee Report (<i>Simon Wood</i>)
Review of Waste Collection Services	Refuse, Recycling and Rural Affairs / Business, Contracts & Street Scene Services	Executive 23 June 2010	Scrutiny Commission	Trades Unions	Committee Report (<i>Michael Brymer</i>)
Environmental Health Commercial Services Enforcement Service Delivery Plan	Environmental Health	Executive 23 June 2010			Committee Report (<i>Steve Merry</i>)

<p>Reports by representatives on Outside Bodies i) Citizens Advice Bureau; ii) MIRA; iii) Next Generation; iv) Voluntary Action Hinckley & Bosworth</p>	<p>Corporate & Scrutiny</p>	<p>Council 29 June 2010</p>			<p>Verbal Report <i>(Councillors Mr JG Bannister, Mr R Ward, Mr DC Bill, Mr KWP Lynch, Mr LJP O'Shea, Ms BM Witherford and Mr DO Wright</i></p>
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JULY 2010

No decisions to be taken

AUGUST 2010

No decisions to be taken

To Be Programmed

Tenant Satisfaction Survey results	Housing		Scrutiny Commission		Committee Report (<i>Sharon Stacey</i>)
Leicestershire Waste Partnership Strategy Review	Business, Contracts & Street Scene Services	Council October/November 2010 TBC			Committee Report & Strategy (<i>Michael Brymer</i>)
Review of Waste Collection Services	Business, Contracts & Street Scene Services	Executive 20 October 2010	Scrutiny Commission		Committee Report (<i>Michael Brymer</i>)
Neighbourhood Wardens Enforcement Policy	Business, Contracts & Street Scene Services		Scrutiny Commission		Committee Report (<i>Caroline Roffey</i>)
Housing Options	Housing				Committee Report (<i>Sharon Stacey</i>)

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	Councillor SL Bray (Leader) Mr S Atkinson (Chief Executive)	Tel: 01455 255606 Fax: 01455 890229 Email: steve.atkinson@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk
Community Direction (including Housing, Community Safety, Partnerships, Environmental Health, Planning & Cultural Services)	Councillor D Bill (Deputy Leader) (Community Safety) Councillor SL Bray (Leader) (Planning) Councillor DS Cope (Housing & Environmental Health) Councillor Ms Moore (Cultural Services) Mr B Cullen (Deputy Chief Executive, Community Direction)	Tel: 01455 255676 Fax: 01455 890229 Email: bill.cullen@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk
Corporate Direction (including Corporate & Customer Resources, Scrutiny, Ethical Standards, Finance, ICT, Estates & Asset Management)	Councillor KWP Lynch (Finance, ICT & Asset Management) Councillor DO Wright (Corporate Services, Equalities) Mr S Kohli (Deputy Chief Executive, Corporate Direction)	Tel: 01455 255607 Fax: 01455 251172 Email: sanjiv.kohli@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk
Business, contract & Streetscene Services (including Refuse Collection, Street Cleansing, Car Park Management, Housing repairs, Neighbourhood Wardens)	Councillor SL Bray (Leader) (Car Parks) Councillor DS Cope (Housing Repairs) Councillor WJ Crooks (Refuse and Recycling, Street Cleansing) Councillor Ms Moore (Green Spaces, Grounds Maintenance) 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, Community Direction)	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 seven Councillors comprising of the Leader, Deputy Leader and five 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 a Panel which reviews ICT. 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

COUNCIL SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

1 APRIL 2010 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mrs R Camamile - Chairman

Mr JG Bannister, Mr JC Bown, Mr DW Inman, Mr K Morrell, Mrs J Richards, Mr BE Sutton and Ms BM Witherford.

Officers in attendance: Mr B Cullen and Miss R Owen.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Mrs A Hall.

2. **MINUTES (CSSC30)**

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2010 be confirmed.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared at this stage.

4. **KEY FRONTLINE SERVICE REVIEW: DEVELOPMENT CONTROL AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (CSSC31)**

The Select Committee received a report which monitored improvements and delivery against stated objectives under the Corporate Performance Plan as applied to Development Control and the Local Development Framework.

Whilst it was noted that performance with regard to dealing with major planning applications was at a high level, it was explained that just one missed target could distort the statistics. It was also explained that whilst our position was comfortably within the top quartile, there was a risk that continued capacity issues may affect this.

Mr Morrell arrived at 6.36pm.

A Member expressed concern that due to the need to meet the timescales, the Planning Committee no longer had the option to defer a decision. They also felt that Ward Councillors were not made aware of applications until much later in the process. In response, the Deputy Chief Executive highlighted the implications on performance achievement and customer service if decisions are not taken on a timely basis at committee and gave his commitment that Ward Members would be notified of major applications at the pre-application stage.

A Member reported that his local Parish Council was concerned that the Borough Council did not take account of the Village Plan. In response it was explained that whilst these plans could be used to shape and support high quality and distinctive development in the area, it could not be used to prevent development in the area.

With regard to enforcement, it was reported that despite capacity issues, performance was high. Members expressed concern about the amount of money wasted on investigating invalid complaints, but in response it was stated that any complaint had to be investigated. A Member asked if compliance with conditions was monitored, and in response it was explained that there was a checking system with Building Control but this probably didn't cover 100% of developments - it was agreed that a response would be brought back to the Committee.

In discussing the LDF, it was explained that the production and adoption of the Core Strategy had contributed to the high level of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant received. A Member expressed concern about the consultation on the LDF undertaken and felt that Parish Councils had not had sufficient opportunity to make representations. The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed there had been extensive consultation throughout key stages of the LDF process but welcomed Members' views on how this could be improved in future. A Member also expressed concern that Borough and Parish Councillors had not been sufficiently involved in consultation on the Earl Shilton and Barwell infrastructure plans and that the Consultant advising on the Sustainable Urban Extensions did not know the area. Another Member spoke in support of the way that consultation on the LDF and SUE had been undertaken and suggested that people may claim they hadn't been consulted when actually their issue was that their views had not been upheld.

It was suggested that Housing Needs Surveys were not undertaken in all parishes as Parish Councils felt they did not require housing, whereas in reality the surveys usually came back with housing needs identified. It was suggested that surveys be undertaken with or without the support of the Parish Councils. The need to encourage people to apply to join the housing register was reiterated.

RESOLVED – progress be endorsed and abovementioned comments be noted.

5. COUNCIL SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2008/2009 (CSSC32)

Members gave consideration to the draft Work Programme 2009/2010. It was agreed that the draft 2010/11 work programme would be brought to the next meeting.

RESOLVED – the work programme be noted.

(The meeting closed at 7.45 pm)

HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL
FINANCE & AUDIT SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

12 APRIL AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr P A S Hall - Chairman

Messrs J G Bannister, P R Batty, D M Gould, M R Lay, R Mayne, K Morrell and R Ward and Ms B M Witherford.

Officers in attendance: Mr D Bunker, Mr S Kohli and Mrs P I Pitt.

Mr R Barnett, Client Manager, RSM Tenon, was also in attendance.

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared at this stage.

2. **MINUTES (FASC48)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2010 were agreed.

3. **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT - BLOCK 6 2009-10 (FASC49)**

Prior to Members' consideration of this and the other reports at this meeting Mr Barnett, in response to a question from the Chairman as to the two different formats of audit information presented tonight, explained that this was done to show Members the comparative differences between the two formats and that from now on there would be one format and that this would take the form of a progress report as discussed at the previous meeting. In all RSM Tenon had made 34 recommendations across the Council Services examined, seven of which were significant. Results generally had been pleasing and good progress had already been made towards implementing the recommendations made.

Mr Gould arrived at 6.37 pm.

Concerns were raised regarding the housing repairs service. Mr Barnett indicated that RSM Tenon had to date focused on the recommendations within the report but could examine the controls in place and broaden the scope to review the operational side. Since the intention was for internal audit to look again in 2010/11 at housing repairs Mr Barnett indicated that he would seek the Committee's views at the next meeting as to the areas to be examined. The Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Direction) indicated that the Strategic Leadership Board was in discussions with Willmot Dixon (Inspace) regarding efficiency initiatives and shared savings. Despite tenant satisfaction being good, of particular concern to Members was the amount of time taken to carry out some repairs. The Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate

Direction) undertook to have discussions with fellow officers, and internal audit, as necessary, regarding operational issues and the possible examination of job sheets and to bring a report to the next meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding the updating of the Schedule of Rates. Although the detailed Schedule of Rates was not a requirement of the Council's Open Book arrangement the Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Direction) undertook to liaise with the Chief Officer, Business Contract and Streetscene Services regarding the management of this.

Mr Barnett referred briefly to a recommendation arising from the audit of the procurement of goods and services, namely the need for documentation of contract files in order to have a clear audit trail. Action had already been taken to address this.

4. NEW COUNCIL OFFICE DEVELOPMENT - INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2009/10 (FASC50)

This report was accepted.

5. MARKFIELD COMMUNITY CENTRE - INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 1009/10 (FASC51)

This review, although advisory, did make recommendations relating to management processes at this Centre, a venture in which the Council was a stakeholder. This report had been considered by the Markfield Community Association, which was aware of the recommendations and would ensure implementation of these wherever possible. Since this facility was a reputational issue for the Council Members considered that it would be useful to have a follow-up by internal audit and Mr Barnett suggested that this could be undertaken in July 2010, with a report to the September committee meeting.

Although the primary purpose of this review had been to evaluate the systems in place it had the benefit of identifying areas of good practice that could be utilised by similar organisations at similar sites, such as the Hinckley Club for Young People. It was considered whether it would be beneficial to involve internal audit on occasions when the Council was giving money to external Bodies, since this would assist service delivery and at the same time protect the reputation of the Council. In response to a question from the Chairman as to whether a financial audit could be imposed, the Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Direction) indicated that if substantial grants were awarded, particularly to sensitive third sector organisations then this would be monitored. Guidance could be provided by the Council until organisations were able to operate independently, a suggested period of some 6-12 months, and thereafter an annual review could be undertaken, with the facility to carry out a full audit. Members were agreed that in future when the Council entered into partnership arrangements it should be part of the award of grant funding and provided resources allow, that the Council be entitled to carry out audit inspections and be included in management arrangements and appointments. Reference was made to the £35,000 which the Council had agreed to give each year to the Hinckley Club for Young People towards running and maintenance costs. The Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate

Direction) indicated that part of this could be used towards the appointment of a manager but the Club would need to put a case forward to use that money for such purposes. The Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Direction) stated that regular meetings chaired by the Leader of the Council took place with representatives of the Club. Additionally, Myspace were very supportive of the project and were assisting the Club in the delivery of the outcomes set out in the business case.

6. PAYROLL - INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2009/10 (FASC52)

Highlighted to Members were the findings/recommendations on pages 57 and 63 relating to payroll reports which had been categorised as significant. These were being addressed but the Accountancy Manager undertook to follow-up the issue of negative amounts appearing on the Payment Method Analysis.

At this juncture the Chairman referred back to the audit of the Asset Register. A new computer system had been installed and data would be updated annually at the end of the financial year. Given the small number and value of transactions affecting the Asset Register it was unlikely that there would be much movement, which could make the identification of any surplus difficult. The Accountancy Manager stated that the frequency of inspections may be reviewed, though it was not usual to review annually.

Brief reference was made to the Groundcare audit and to the RSM Tenon recommendation that technical officers keep a record of areas inspected. This recommendation had been agreed by management.

7. STRATEGY FOR INTERNAL AUDIT 2010/11 TO 2012/13 (FASC53)

Mr Barnett referred to the 3-year strategy to examine changes in systems etc. The main changes were outlined in section 3.4 of the report and had followed discussions with Council officers that there should be certain additions to the 2010/11 plan. This would result in a further 26 days being added to the plan which, it was emphasised, was flexible and could have changes built in.

Further discussion arose regarding the management of Hinckley Club for Young People in that if a manager post was funded by the Council the terms of employment should be held by the Council and as a partner in this venture should be involved in the recruitment process. As was the case at Markfield Community Centre consideration could be given to a Council officer being involved in the line management of the new club.

Reference was made to the National Performance Indicator which applied whereby invoices had to be paid within 30 days. So far as local suppliers were concerned the target date was 10 days. The Committee commended this as a boost to the local economy.

8 DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11

The Chairman briefly referred to the suggested programme and indicated that from August onwards Treasury Management Performance reports would be presented quarterly.

The Chairman indicated that 6 Audit Committee checklists had now been received.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were reminded that the next scheduled meeting was on Monday 24 May 2010.

(The meeting closed at 7.55 pm)