

HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL  
SCRUTINY COMMISSION  
15 JUNE 2006 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr M R Lay - Chairman  
Mrs R Camamile - Joint Vice-Chairman

Mr P R Batty, Mr D C Bill, Mr J F Collins, Mrs M A Cook, Mr R D Ellis, Mrs D Finney, Mr K A J Hunnybun and Mr J E Stanley.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.4, Mrs M J Crooks and Mr N B L Davis also attended the meeting.

Officers in attendance: Mr S Atkinson, Mr Michael Brymer, Mr B Cullen, Mrs T Darke, Ms A Ker, Mr S Merry, Miss R. Owen, Mr R Palmer, Mr T M Prowse, Mrs J Puffett and Ms S Stacey.

60 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Mr D E Hinton, Mr K W P Lynch, Ms. J.E. Price and Mrs M L Sherwin and the substitution of Mrs M A Cook for Mr Hinton authorised in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.3.

61 MINUTES (SC1)

On the motion of Mr Hunnybun, seconded by Mrs Camamile, it was

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 4 May 2006 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

62 ADDITIONAL URGENT BUSINESS BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

It was agreed that an urgent item of business 'Development of Recycling Services' (report SC15, minute 77 refers) be accepted in order to give the Commission the opportunity to scrutinise the issue before a decision being made by full Council. It was noted that this report was not for publication and as such, consideration would be in private session.

63 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

64 COMMUNITY SAFETY REVIEW

The Corporate Performance and Strategy Manager gave a presentation which suggested some areas to investigate as part of the Community Safety Review. In general, Members felt that the primary focus of the review should be the Community Safety Partnership, including whether it was a true partnership, what its remit was, what its objectives and achievements were, how its budget was set and whether the public was aware of the partnership.

As the partnership was a statutory requirement, it was suggested that a good starting point would be legislation and guidelines that governed this. It was also suggested that public consultation could be undertaken, the Police Authority

could be invited to have an involvement in the review, and an expert witness could be called, perhaps from a successful partnership.

RESOLVED – the above points be included in the Community Safety Review.

65 COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION STRATEGY (SC2)

Members were informed that recent public consultation and best practice from other authorities had been taken into account when drafting this strategy, which also fed into the Corporate Performance Plan.

A Member felt that the estimation of cost implications seemed very low, but in response it was explained that most advertising used existing materials, for example press releases and the Borough Bulletin.

RESOLVED – the above comment be noted and the Communications and Consultation Strategy be endorsed.

66 SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS AND DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS (SC3)

Consideration was given to a report which advised on the current policies and procedures regarding the receipt and expenditure of contributions and to assess and review these. Members were informed that there was a Section 106 Working Group consisting of a Councillor from each party, Green Space, Legal and Finance officers and which looked at where income from Section 106 agreements should be spent.

Members felt strongly that developer contributions should be spent in the area of the development, although flexibility of use was acknowledged. It was also felt that the scope of the spending should be widened and spent on local amenities, i.e. bus shelters and street lighting.

On the motion of Mr Lay, seconded by Mrs Camamile, it was

RESOLVED –

- (i) further investigations be made into:
  - (a) the spending of developer contributions in the local area;
  - (b) the flexibility of use of Section 106 monies.
- (ii) subject to (i) above, the report be supported.

67 CONSULTATION DRAFT OF HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH COMMUNITY PLAN APRIL 2007 – MARCH 2012 (SC4)

Members were informed that this was a key plan and had undergone considerable consultation, including with the Local Strategic Partnership.

A Member referred to page 15 of the Community Plan document and asked if a design guide was going to be produced to ensure environmental best practice in town centre developments, and in response it was hoped that developers would be expected to provide these. Members felt that water recycling units and wind turbines should already be built into properties in new developments.

With regard to targets contained within the report, it was felt that these should be definable with added value.

RESOLVED – that the above comments be noted and the recommendations contained within the report be supported.

68 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK 2026 – CORE STRATEGY (SC5)

The Scrutiny Commission considered a report which outlined the Core Strategy preferred options consultation on the Local Development Framework. It was noted that the consultation had favoured urban concentration with limited development beyond the urban core. A Member questioned the viability of doing this without building on green space.

Concern was expressed that commuter areas needed to be looked into, and improving accessibility for communities.

With regard to the details contained in the LDF, Mr Bill wished it to be recorded that he was in objection to Area 4 due to development around the Northern Perimeter Road.

RESOLVED – the Core Strategy and principles for public consultation be endorsed, with the above comments being noted.

69 DRAFT CORPORATE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2006-2011 (SC6)

Reference was made to the workshop which took place on 12 June with regard to the Corporate Performance Plan, and the Scrutiny Commission was informed that two main items raised were the need for more customer focus and a good quality service, not just high quantity of output.

RESOLVED – the Draft Corporate Performance Plan be supported and the comments made at the workshop on 12 June be noted.

70 FIXED PENALTY NOTICES, CLEAN NEIGHBOURHOODS AND ENVIRONMENT ACT 2005 (SC7)

The Scrutiny Commission received a report which outlined issues that could be dealt with using a Fixed Penalty Notice. It was explained that many of the charges could be set locally, and the final column of the table gave the recommended amount.

Members expressed concern with regard to reducing the amount of the Fixed Penalty Notice for early payment, and it was suggested that if people did not pay they could be prosecuted. However, officers explained that prosecutions took a lot of time and money so it was better to encourage people to pay early, which, it was heard, many of them did.

Members requested a list of Fixed Penalty Notices issues over the previous 12 months.

RESOLVED

- (i) the recommendations be supported;
- (ii) a briefing note be sent to all Members listing Fixed Penalty Notices issued over the previous 12 months.

71 HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY (SC8)

Members received a report which advised them of the revised Allocations Policy for the allocation of Council properties. It was noted that a two-part register had been set up – an active list and a reserve list. People with no local connection would be put onto the reserve register, as would those who have been evicted under Anti-social Behaviour Orders as they would be seen as intentionally homeless.

With regard to the section on ‘Social Reasons’, concern was expressed that the decision about how many points to give someone on these grounds was left to officers’ discretion. In response, it was explained that information from a range of agencies was considered, but officers agreed to include criteria to clarify. It was reported that the Housing Task Group would be monitoring the new policy and points given for social reasons would be reported back to them.

RESOLVED – the Housing Allocations Policy be endorsed.

72 PRIVATE SECTOR RENEWAL POLICY 2006 – 2008 (SC9)

At this juncture, Mrs Camamile declared a personal interest in this item.

A report was presented which advised Members of the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2006-2008. It was noted that all Members had had concerns about the reduction in the grant so were pleased to hear that the amount had been increased.

RESOLVED – the recommendations within the report be supported.

73 REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE CAR PARKING TASK GROUP (SC10)

It was reported that the main task of the Car Parking Task Group had been to look at car parking in the borough, initially looking at car parks in rural areas but also receiving reports on two car parks in Hinckley town centre due to issues that arose during its deliberations.

It was reported that one of the recommendations was to approach Parish Councils to offer them management of some of the car parks to ensure rural car parks were protected against sale and development. Some Members expressed concern that if the Parish Council didn’t want to take over the management of a car park, the Borough Council would sell the land. However it was stated that the reason for the suggested offer was so the Parish Councils could have an income from the car park if they so wished.

Members felt that options for Parish Councils should be made clearer in the report and asked the Car Parking Task Group to continue discussions and bring revised recommendations back to the Scrutiny Commission.

RESOLVED – the Car Parking Task Group take the above comments into account in continuing discussions and bring back revised recommendations to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Commission.

74 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND CABINET FORWARD PLAN (SC11)

Members gave consideration to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2006/2007.

RESOLVED – the Overview and Scrutiny work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.

75 MINUTES OF SELECT COMMITTEES / SCRUTINY PANELS

Minutes of the following meetings were agreed:

- (i) Finance and Audit Services Select Committee, 8 May 2006 (SC12);
- (ii) Council Services Select Committee, 11 May (SC13);
- (iii) Housing Task Group, 31 May 2006 (SC14).

76 MATTER FROM WHICH THE PUBLIC MAY BE EXCLUDED

RESOLVED - in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the remaining item of business on the ground that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 10 of Part I of Schedule 12A of that Act.

It was requested that in future, the reason for exclusion of the public be clearly indicated in the report.

77 DEVELOPMENT OF RECYCLING SERVICES (SC15)

Members were presented with a report which outlined the work undertaken with regard to a cardboard collection service. It was noted that the scheme had been trialed in one area of the borough, and subject to Cabinet approval, would gradually be rolled out throughout the borough. It was reiterated that only grey cardboard would be collected in the brown bins in order to maintain the quality of the compost.

Concerns were raised with regard to bin storage for those with small gardens and additional bins for those with capacity issues.

RESOLVED – the above comments be noted and the recommendations contained within the report be supported.

(The meeting closed at 9.33 pm)