

HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMISSION
19 JULY 2007 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr MR Lay - Chairman
Mrs R Camamile - Joint Vice-Chairman
Me KWP Lynch - Joint Vice-Chairman

Mr JG Bannister, Mr PR Batty, Mr PS Bessant, Mr JD Cort, Mr DM Gould, Mrs A Hall, Mr DW Inman, Mr C Ladkin and Mr AJ Smith.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.4, Messrs DC Bill, WJ Crooks and BE Sutton also attended the meeting.

Officers in attendance: Mr S Atkinson, Mr Michael Brymer, Mr M Burns, Mr B Cullen, Mr R Grantham, Miss L Horton, Mr A Jones, Mr S Kohli, Miss R Owen and Mr T M Prowse.

102 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Mrs R Camamile, Mr T McClure, Dr JR Moore, Mr K Morrell, and Mr K Nichols and the substitution of Mr Inman for Mr Nichols was authorised in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.3.

103 MINUTES (SC12)

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

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2007 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

104 ADDITIONAL URGENT BUSINESS BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Members were reminded that the Leader of the Council had been invited to answer questions about the Executive's priorities. It was noted that this would take place before item 6 (minute 106 refers).

105 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mrs Hall and Mr Inman declared a personal interest in report no.SC14: Play Strategy (page 24, Paragraphs 3.9.3 and 4.1) as Members of Burbage Parish Council.

Mr Smith declared a personal interest in the same item as a member of the Play Partnership.

Messrs Crooks and Gould arrived at 6.35pm.

106 QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Mr Bill began by outlining current plans, particularly with regard to the Masterplan. He stated that progress was being made but that one of the priorities was ensuring that the community supported plans. He also stated that activity to regenerate Barwell and Earl Shilton, Bagworth and Thornton and Sheepy and Twycross was underway.

A Member asked about plans to relocate the Council offices due to the vast sums that would need to be spent on maintenance in the future and the negative carbon footprint of the building. In response the Leader explained that a new Council building was not high on the list of the public's priorities, and as such the first projects to be undertaken would be those from which the community would benefit.

107 ESTATES AND ASSET MANAGEMENT MAINTENANCE POLICY (SC13)

The Commission was presented with the Estates & Asset Management Maintenance Policy and it was explained that the policy was part strategic, part operational and part financial.

A Member drew attention to the paragraph on 'Dispute Resolution Strategy' on page 6 which continued to page 7 and queried the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution. In response officers agreed to reconsider and revise this part of the Policy.

Members expressed concern with regard to future maintenance implications, particularly at the Leisure Centre, and officers agreed that currently the contract was very favourable to the Council, but when the contract ends in around 18 months' time there could be high maintenance and other running costs of the Centre.

RECOMMENDED – the Dispute Resolution Paragraph of the Policy be revised.

108 PLAY STRATEGY (SC14)

The Play Strategy which was being submitted as part of the Borough Council's bid to the Big Lottery was presented to Members for their comment. It was noted that the bid would be submitted and some feedback had been received and the strategy amended slightly as a result.

In response to a Members' query, the Commission was informed that areas were allocated points based on different criteria, and Parish Councils had been consulted on play provision within the Parish. Members were assured that Town and Parish Councils and local Councillors would be informed of final decisions about locations of play areas.

RESOLVED – the report be endorsed.

109 OVERVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE MONITORING OFFICER/ DEPUTY MONITORING OFFICER IN THE PAST YEAR (SC15)

The Scrutiny Commission was provided with an overview of the work of the Monitoring Officer / Deputy Monitoring Officer in the past year. The broad role of the Monitoring Officer was highlighted.

RESOLVED – the report be noted and referred to Council.

110 COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (CPA) PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT (SC16)

Members received a report which sought support for submission of an application for CPA recategorisation from 'Fair' to 'Good' in February 2008. It was explained that once the application had been submitted, the Audit Commission would undertake preparation for the review including looking at minutes, reports and the local press, then would spend a week on-site talking to staff, members of the public and Councillors.

RESOLVED –

- (i) an IDeA Peer Review be undertaken within the Council in September 2007, with 'on site' work during week commencing 10 September 2007;
- (ii) an application be made to the Audit Commission in February 2008 for recategorisation from 'Fair' to 'Good' under CPA arrangements, subject to satisfactory progress reports to Members;
- (iii) work on an IDeA review of the Local Strategic Partnership in December 2007 to link with the Scrutiny Commission's work programme be supported.

111 LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT (SHMA) (SC17)

The Scrutiny Commission was updated on progress towards the procurement of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area within the East Midlands Region. It was explained that HBBC would be the administrating body for themselves, the county and the city. It was noted that the Scrutiny Commission would be a formal consultee.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the approach and timetable be endorsed;
- (ii) the Council's role as the administrator for the total cost of the project in its role as Lead Member Authority be supported.

Messrs Bill and Crooks left the meeting at 8.11pm. Mr Cort left at 8.15pm.

112 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP REVIEW (SC18)

Members were informed of progress following recommendations of the Scrutiny Commission on 4 January 2007. They were updated on progress made by the Hinckley and Bosworth Community Safety Partnership's own Improvement Action Plan, and updated on the progress of other key Partnership improvement issues.

It was reported that the Community Safety Partnership was grateful to the Scrutiny Commission for undertaking the review, which tied in with its own review. It was noted that the Partnership had developed priority action plans to improve the service.

Members still felt that there was a lack of communication and reporting from the Partnership to Borough Councillors, and asked that a quarterly report be brought to the Commission.

At the meeting, Members were presented with additional papers which included the Audit Commission Inspection report on Community Safety and the Audit Commission Action Plan Update Document. The Commission felt that it needed time to look at the information contained within the additional papers, and asked that discussion on this be deferred to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Commission.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the report be noted and supported;
- (ii) discussions on the Audit Commission Inspection Report on Community Safety and the Audit Commission Action Plan Update Document be deferred to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Commission.

113 CONSULTATION RESULTS – CITIZENS PANEL MARCH 2007 SURVEY (SC19)

The Scrutiny Commission was informed of the findings of the Citizens Panel survey conducted in March 2007 and the proposed action resulting from the survey. It was noted that areas of concerns were Community Safety, anti-social behaviour, drugs and alcohol and facilities for young people.

Members asked if this information was routinely fed back to service areas, as they noted that whilst drugs and alcohol had been highlighted as a concern in the survey, it was not on the Community Safety Partnership's list of priorities. They therefore asked that this particular result be fed back to the Community Safety team for them to decide whether drugs and alcohol was a priority.

RESOLVED

- (i) the results of the consultation be noted and the report be endorsed;
- (ii) results be fed back to service areas and partner agencies to assist them in setting priorities.

114 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MEMBERS QUESTIONNAIRE (SC20)

Members were presented with the outcome of the survey undertaken in April 2006. It was agreed that this exercise would be repeated annually.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

115 LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINY REVIEW (SC21)

The Scrutiny Commission was provided with introductory information for the proposed Scrutiny review of the Hinckley & Bosworth Local Strategic Partnership. It was noted that the review would be concluded with a final report in January to tie in with the LSP Peer Review.

Members of the Commission were invited to assist in scoping the review, and Mr Ladkin agreed to attend the next briefing with the Chairman and Vice-chairmen to discuss the review.

- (i) the approach to the review be agreed;
- (ii) Mr Ladkin, along with the Chairman and Vice-chairmen of the Commission, meet to scope the review.

116 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2007/2008 (SC22)

Members gave consideration to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2007/2008. It was agreed that smaller groups of Members be appointed to scope the next study when appropriate.

RESOLVED – the work programme be noted.

117 CABINET FORWARD PLAN (SC23)

Members received the Forward Plan of Cabinet and Council decisions and were given the opportunity to ask to scrutinise any of the reports listed.

RESOLVED – the Forward Plan be noted.

118 MINUTES OF SELECT COMMITTEES / SCRUTINY PANELS

RESOLVED – the following minutes be received:

- (i) Finance & Audit Services Select Committee – 21 May 2007;
- (ii) Council Services Select Committee – 31 May 2007;
- (iii) Finance & Audit Services Select Committee – 25 June 2007;
- (iv) E-Government Scrutiny Panel – 25 June 2007.

(The meeting closed at 9.05 pm)