

HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMISSION
30 AUGUST 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, Mr C Ladkin, Mr K Nichols and Mr AJ Smith.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.4, Mr DC Bill, Mrs J Richards and Mr R Ward also attended the meeting.

Officers in attendance: Mr S Atkinson, Mr D Bell, Mr C Bellavia, Mr Michael Brymer, Mr Mr B Cullen, Mrs T Darke, Mr R Grantham, Mr P Langham, Miss R Owen, Mr T M Prowse and Mrs S Stacey. Alan Long from Steria also attended the meeting.

169 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Mrs Hall and Dr Moore.

170 MINUTES (SC28)

It was noted that Mrs Camamile was listed as being present and as having submitted apologies. It was agreed that she be removed from the list of Members present. It was moved by Mr Batty, seconded by Mr Bessant and

RESOLVED – subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2007 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

171 ADDITIONAL URGENT BUSINESS BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Members were reminded that they would receive a presentation with regard to Members' ICT which had been agreed after preparation of the agenda.

172 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

Mr Ladkin arrived at 6.42pm.

173 MEMBERS' ICT

Paul Langham gave a presentation to the Scrutiny Commission on proposals for Members' ICT. It was explained that there were 3 options with varying levels of accessibility and security and that the E-Government Scrutiny Panel had supported option 3 - the 'flexible' option. The E-Government Scrutiny Panel was thanked for their work on developing proposals for Members' ICT.

174 LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP (LSP) SCRUTINY REVIEW

The Leader of the Council attended as a witness in his capacity as Chairman of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). He reported that the LSP set targets and monitored progress and was working on strengthening partnership working and community engagement. Officers reported that the LSP was effective in decision making as it worked closely with other agencies, including the County Council.

Members expressed concern that the Borough Council appeared to be contributing the majority of funding to the LSP. It was requested that witnesses from other partner agencies be invited to the Scrutiny Commission and it was agreed that representatives of the County Council, the Primary Care Trust and the Economic Development Group be called upon to attend.

RESOLVED – representatives of the County Council, the Primary Care Trust and the Economic Development Group be invited to the Scrutiny Commission as witnesses for the review.

175 AUDIT COMMISSION INSPECTION REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

The Scrutiny Commission was presented with the Community Safety Service Inspection report that had been tabled at the previous meeting then deferred to allow Members the opportunity to read the report in greater detail.

Mr Bill left the meeting at 7.47pm.

Attention was drawn to the ongoing improvement plan appended to the report, and it was reported that improvements were already becoming evident since the change in the structure of the partnership, and it was now one of the best performing partnerships in the County.

It was noted that a 'State of the Partnership' event had been arranged for November, to which all Members would be invited. It was agreed that a further progress report on the Community Safety Partnership be brought to the Scrutiny Commission after this event.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the Inspection Report and action plan be noted;
- (ii) the improvements made within the Community Safety Partnership be noted;

- (iii) a further progress report be brought to the Commission after the 'State of the Partnership' event in November.

Mr Lynch left the meeting at 7.50pm.

176 UPDATE ON SHELTERED HOUSING REVIEW (SC29)

The Scrutiny Commission was provided with an update on the Sheltered Housing Review. Members were informed that a consultant had been appointed earlier in the year to look at needs and the Housing Task Group had set up a smaller working group to look at the recommendations of the consultant.

Mr Lynch returned at 7.57pm.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

177 THE PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT (SC30)

Members received a report which advised them on the proposed allocation of outstanding and new planning delivery grant funds. It was noted that £274,000 had been received this year, which was the maximum for which the Borough Council was eligible.

A Member expressed concern that the increase in the speed of determining applications had been achieved to the detriment of thoroughness. However, Officers explained that a lot of work was undertaken with applicants at the pre-application stage. Concern was also raised by Members that there was not enough time to defer reports if necessary due to the deadline for non-determination.

It was agreed that the Planning Service be congratulated on its achievements but that Members' concerns about the national guidance and its requirements be noted.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the Council's success in achieving the high level of Planning Delivery Grant be noted;
- (ii) concerns with regard to Members' participation and their role in planning decisions be taken on board;
- (iii) concerns be noted with regard to the implications of the national guidance and requirements being the potential sacrificing of thoroughness for expediency.

Mrs Richards and Mr Ward left at 8.14pm.

178 STAFF SURVEY RESULTS 2007 (SC31)

The Scrutiny Commission was presented with the overall findings for the 2007 Staff Survey. Members were pleased with the generally positive messages arising from the survey.

Mrs Richards returned at 8.18pm.

It was noted that areas of concern such as low satisfaction with the working environment and concerns about training opportunities were being addressed by the Strategic Leadership Board. It was requested that the Council Services Select Committee monitors these issues on an ongoing basis.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the Staff Survey results be noted;
- (ii) the Council Services Select Committee be asked to monitor progress on actions to address the issues of concern.

179 CONSULTATION RESULTS OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES AND BUDGET SPEND (SC32)

The Scrutiny Commission was informed of the results and actions following the consultation on Council priorities and budget spend. It was noted that high priority services remained unchanged. Members emphasised that they had a commitment to act on these priorities, and it was agreed that the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen would discuss the issues and report back to the Commission on suggestions for tackling this. It was also noted that two issues had arisen to include on the Work Programme of the Scrutiny Commission.

A Member requested that in future all percentages contained within the report were reported to avoid ambiguity, and asked that precise figures be included. In response the Commission was informed that these details had been included in a powerpoint presentation which it had been intended to show at the meeting but was possible due to time constraints. (The presentation is therefore attached at Appendix A to these minutes).

RESOLVED –

- (i) those issues identified be included on the Work Programme of the Scrutiny Commission;
- (ii) the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the Scrutiny Commission investigate how to act on the priorities highlighted;
- (iii) the consultation results be noted and the results be further incorporated into the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

180 RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK - 1ST QUARTER REPORT 2007/08(SC33)

Members were advised on progress to manage strategic and operational risks and the development of the Council's risk management strategy. It was reported that the Finance & Audit Services Select Committee had welcomed and acknowledged the positive content of the report.

RESOLVED - the report as supported by the Finance & Audit Services Select Committee be endorsed.

181 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK 2007/08 (SC34)

The Commission was provided with the first quarter performance indicator information for 2007/08. Members were informed that where service areas would not be achieving targets, the Strategic Leadership Board had requested detailed action plans. It was noted that 91% of actions outlined in the Corporate Plan were on target.

Concern was expressed with regard to the low performance in non-domestic rates collected, and it was noted that an action plan had been produced to address this.

The Chairman of the Council Services Select Committee reported that the Select Committee had been through the performance indicators in detail and were happy with the action plans produced.

RESOLVED –

- (i) performance improvement be noted;
- (ii) the Council Services Select Committee continue to monitor performance indicators.

182 USE OF RESOURCES SELF ASSESSMENT 2007 (SC35)

The Scrutiny Commission was provided with the Council's self-assessment submission for the Use of Resources Assessment 2007.

RESOLVED - the Council's self-assessment submission for presentation to the Executive be endorsed.

183 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2007/2008 (SC36)

Members gave consideration to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2007/2008. Members were reminded of the additional meeting on 6 September.

RESOLVED – the work programme be noted with additions as agreed at this meeting.

184 CABINET FORWARD PLAN (SC37)

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.

Mrs Camamile left the meeting at 8.43pm.

185 MINUTES OF SELECT COMMITTEES / SCRUTINY PANELS

RESOLVED – the following minutes be received:

- (i) Finance & Audit Services Select Committee – 2 July 2007 (SC38);
- (ii) Council Services Select Committee – 5 July 2007 (SC39).

186 MATTERS FROM WHICH THE PUBLIC MAY BE EXCLUDED

On the motion of Mr Lynch, seconded by Mr Nichols, it was

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

187 DEVELOPMENT OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENVIRONMENT AND WASTE SERVICES (SC41)

Members were advised of work undertaken to investigate developmental opportunities for Environment and Waste Services.

At this juncture, Mr Lay declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in part of the report as an employee of the Probation Service.

RESOLVED - the Action Plan be endorsed.

188 FUTURE PROVISION OF DSO SERVICES (SC42)

The Scrutiny Commission received a report on the future provision of DSO services. Some Members expressed concern with regard to entering into a long contract and emphasised that the effectiveness of the contract with regard to best value should be reviewed from time to time.

RECOMMENDED - the recommendations contained within the report be supported and the abovementioned comments be taken into account by Council.

(The meeting closed at 9.24 pm)

CHAIRMAN