

HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMISSION
28 NOVEMBER 2007 AT 6.30 PM

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

Mr DM Gould, Mrs A Hall, Mr C Ladkin, Mr K Morrell and Mr K Nichols.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.4, Mr R Ward also attended the meeting.

Officers in attendance: Mr S Atkinson, Mr C Bellavia, Mr Michael Brymer, Miss L Horton, Miss R Owen and Mrs S Stacey.

Mr Allan Watson, JBA Consulting, was present for report no SC61 'Strategic Flood Risk Assessment'.

333 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Messrs Bannister and McClure. It was noted that Mr WJ Crooks had been invited for item 7 on the agenda 'Rural Areas Review – Update on Implementation' as Executive Member for Rural Issues, but had submitted his apologies due to a prior engagement.

334 MINUTES (SC60)

It was noted that Mrs Camamile had sent apologies but these were not recorded in the minutes. It was moved by Mr Nichols, seconded by Mr Lynch and

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meetings held on 11 October 2007 be confirmed subject to the above amendment and signed by the Chairman.

335 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

336 STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT (SFRA) FINAL REPORT (SC61)

Allan Watson, Senior Analyst from JBA Consulting, gave a presentation on the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, outlining high risk areas and those that would be suitable for development. Members expressed concern with regard to the role of the local water authority and the apparent lack of responsibility taken by them for many issues.

RESOLVED

- (i) the findings of the report be noted;
- (ii) adoption of the report as part of the evidence base in the production of the Local Development Framework be supported.

337 RURAL AREAS REVIEW – UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION (SC62)

Members were updated on progress of the implementation of the Rural Areas Review undertaken by the Scrutiny Commission on 2005/06 and 2006/07. Members reiterated that the review had been worthwhile and there had been progress as a result.

Concern was expressed with regard to the allocation of monies from the Parish Initiative Fund, and in response it was stated that there had not been many applications for funding during the previous year. It was felt that this may be due to lack of publicity amongst Parish Councils, which was being addressed.

With regard to rural housing and in response to a Members' question, it was stated that discussions were being resumed with Twycross Parish Council to commence a housing needs survey. Mr Morrell asked whether an 'Affordable Homes Champion' had been appointed, and whether his name could be put forward if this had not yet been agreed.

Members requested that a further progress report on the implementation of outcomes from the Rural Areas Review be brought to the Commission in 12 months' time.

RESOLVED

- (i) Mr Morrell be put forward as 'Affordable Housing Champion' if this has not yet been agreed;
- (ii) A further report be brought to the Scrutiny Commission in 12 months' time;
- (iii) Progress made to date be noted and future planned actions be endorsed;
- (iv) The Executive Member be asked to produce an annual report.

338 LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP (LSP) REVIEW – INTERIM REPORT (SC63)

Members received a report which outlined comments made by Partners of the Local Strategic Partnership from the interview of witnesses at the previous meeting of the Commission. Generally Members felt that although the answers and information provided was positive, further evidence of tangible outcomes was required. Members felt that they still required further information with regard to how the LSP spends its money. Examples of outcomes delivered were the Community Transport Scheme and the evaluation of the 'What's Going Down' activities.

RESOLVED

- (i) A breakdown of expenditure of the LSP be requested;
- (ii) A further report be received in January.

339 SHELTERED HOUSING REVIEW (SC71)

The Scrutiny Commission received a report which advised of the Housing Task Group's preferred option for the reconfiguration of the Council's Sheltered Housing Service. It was noted that they had supported Flexible Option 2, as detailed in 5.2 and 5.3 of the report.

The Scrutiny Commission wished to express their thanks to the Housing Task Group and the officers for their hard work, and felt that although they still had some concerns with regard to the scheme, the option recommended was the most suitable for all concerned and offered flexibility for future development of the service.

RECOMMENDED – the Executive agrees to Flexible Option 2 as the preferred option.

340 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK (SC64)

Members were provided with the Council's performance position for the first six months of 2007/08 and an update on the Council's future planning arrangements. It was noted that there had been continued improvement, although the sickness absence figures had increased slightly in October.

Concern was expressed with regard to time taken to re-let housing and it was agreed that a report be brought to the Council Services Select Committee to allow Members to look at possible reasons for this including any changes in regulations which may be a mitigating factor.

RESOLVED

- (i) The Council's continued improvement be acknowledged;
- (ii) A report on time taken to re-let housing be provided to the Council Services Select Committee.

341 RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK – 6 MONTHLY REPORT (SC65)

A report was presented to Members which advised on progress to manage strategic and operational risks and the development of the Council's risk management arrangements.

The Chairman of the Finance & Audit Services Select Committee reported that he had requested that risk management reports be supplied on a six-monthly basis. The Scrutiny Commission agreed the recommendations without further debate.

RESOLVED

- (i) The report and recommendations contained therein be endorsed;
- (ii) Future reports be submitted on a 6-monthly basis.

342 DEVELOPING THE WORK PROGRAMME (SC66)

Members received a report which informed them of the latest publication from the Centre for Public Scrutiny on how Overview and Scrutiny could help local authorities meet their equalities duties.

RESOLVED – the Scrutiny Commission

- (i) addresses equality issues within its work programme;
- (ii) includes equalities implications in respect of items/topics on the its agenda and reports on progress of its progress to monitor equality schemes in the annual report;
- (iii) reviews the Council's progress on equalities as part of the Work Programme.

343 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2007/2008 (SC67)

Members gave consideration to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2007/2008. It was agreed that the meeting in February be held on the 19 February 2008.

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

344 CABINET FORWARD PLAN (SC68)

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.

345 MINUTES OF SELECT COMMITTEES / SCRUTINY PANELS

RESOLVED – the following minutes be received:

- (i) Council Services Select Committee – 27 September 2007 (SC69);
- (ii) Housing Task Group – 25 October 2007 (SC70).

(The meeting closed at 7.47pm)