

HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMISSION
23 JULY 2008 AT 6.30 PM

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

Mr DM Gould, Mrs A Hall, Mr DW Inman, Mr CG Joyce, Dr JR Moore, Mr K Nichols and Mr R Ward.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.4, Mr JG Bannister also attended the meeting.

Officers in attendance: Mr B Cullen, Mrs T Darke, Mr R Grantham, Miss L Horton, Mrs J Neachell, Miss R Owen and Mr TM Prowse.

Also in attendance: Inspector Ball, Hinckley LPU, Clive Mitchell, Lead Inspector (Audit Commission Corporate Inspection Team) and Nick Willmott, GP.

100 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Mr PR Batty, Mr PS Bessant, Mr C Ladkin and Mrs Bron Witherford, with Mr Ward substituting for Mr Ladkin in accordance with procedure rule 4.3.

101 MINUTES (SC13)

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

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2008 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

Dr Moore arrived at 6.32pm.

At this juncture, the Chairman announced that in future a short pre-meeting would be held at 6.00pm before the meeting of the Scrutiny Commission to prepare for interviewing witnesses.

102 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Gould declared a personal interest in item 10 – Terms of Reference for Earl Shilton and Barwell Scrutiny Panel.

Mr and Mrs Hall declared personal interests in item 11 – Voluntary & Community Sector Consultation.

Nick Willmott, a GP from Castlemead Surgery, Hinckley and a member of the Professional Executive Committee of the Leicestershire & Rutland Primary Care Trust (PCT), attended the meeting to give a presentation on the out-of-hours services in the borough. He outlined plans to provide a nurse-led out-of-hours service in the area next year, and Leicestershire & Rutland PCT's intention to take over the out-of-hours provision for the Hinckley area which was currently provided by Warwickshire PCT (at George Elliott Hospital, Nuneaton). With regard to the suggestion to have a minor injuries unit in the Oadby and Wigston area, Mr Willmott supported this as patients were generally happy with the current hours and service provided in Hinckley & Bosworth. He stated however that he supported the need for a GP-led out-of-hours service in Hinckley, rather than a nurse-led unit.

In response to Members' concerns about representation of General Practitioners on the PCT, Mr Willmott confirmed that there were six GPs on the board, and he felt that GPs were adequately represented and that the Chair was supportive of General Practice. He stated he was happy to take views of the Commission to the PCT.

With regard to Leicestershire PCT's plans to take over services for the Hinckley area from the George Elliott Hospital, it was confirmed that Market Bosworth, Newbold Verdon, Groby, Ratby and Desford already used services provided by the Leicester, Loughborough or Coalville hospitals, so this would present no change for those areas.

The Commission repeated its support for a GP-led unit in Hinckley. It was agreed that Mr Willmott would be sent a copy of the Scrutiny Commission's final report.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the Scrutiny Commission's support for a GP-led unit in Hinckley be noted and reported to the PCT;
- (ii) any further questions or requests for clarification be collated and sent to Mr Willmott;
- (iii) a copy of the Commission's final report be sent to Mr Willmott and to the PCT to feed into the Community Hospitals consultation.

Ron Grantham and Inspector Martin Ball updated the Scrutiny Commission on LAA Safer Communities national indicators, current performance, priorities, achievements and challenges of the Hinckley and Bosworth Community Safety Partnership. It was reported that there had been a significant reduction in overall crime in the Borough and a clear improvement in the direction of travel of the partnership's performance compared to its Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership family group.

Members welcomed the report and highlighted the positive direction of travel since the Scrutiny Commission undertook their review of the Community Safety Partnership. Concern was, however, expressed with regard to the misleading nature of some statistics, particularly with regard to drug-related offences. It was explained that whilst a raid on a property in which drugs were found was recorded as a drug-related crime, a burglary which had taken place in order to steal money for drugs or by someone who was under the influence of drugs was recorded as a burglary.

With regard to metal crime, Inspector Ball confirmed that regular spot checks were undertaken to identify any stolen vehicles or metal at scrap dealers' yards. It was reported that there was currently a problem with people stealing catalytic converters and selling them overseas.

Members discussed the night-time economy and were informed of the success of the Safer Hinckley Campaign and ongoing initiatives including Street Pastors and Taxi Marshal schemes. Initiatives such as the successful 'lock 'em inn' campaign and the new pilot Bluetooth messaging project were highlighted.

Members asked that future reports be brought on a quarterly or six-monthly basis and contain more emphasis on how the successes reported were due to the partnership working arrangements.

RESOLVED

- (i) the report be noted;
- (ii) Community Safety updates be provided on a quarterly or six-monthly basis to be agreed by Members;
- (iii) future reports contain more emphasis on how the successes reported are due to partnership working.

105 CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN (SC15)

Members received a report which informed them of the method of production of the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) and addressed Members' queries on the plan. It was reported that a report would be going before the Executive on 30 July requesting additional funding for the CCAP.

Concern was expressed with regard to resources required in order to carry out the actions on the CCAP. In response it was reported that the Home Energy Conservation officer would assist with the initiative, and that if more financial resources were required, these would be requested. Members wished to see resource requirements listed against each action on the plan.

With regard to the need for private homeowners to comply with the plan, Members suggested that as community leaders they should educate and encourage compliance but could not enforce.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

106 DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS (SC16)

Members were informed of the position in respect of the Section 106 contributions that had not been spent within the five year period and therefore may be clawed back, and those that were between four and five years.

Concern was expressed that Parish Councils were not aware of the money available. In response it was reported that work was being undertaken with parishes to identify how money would be spent should it become available. Information was also published on the website and was accessible to parishes. Members were also reminded of the Section 106 Members' Forum which discussed allocation of contributions. Members felt that there should be a warning system to highlight approaching time limits and notify Parish Councils. It was also requested that a breakdown of the £2.6m listed in the Statement of Accounts (presented to the Finance & Audit Services Select Committee on 23 June 2008) be provided, including a breakdown by parish, and a note of to what it could be allocated.

The Commission was informed that interest on contributions held in the Council's accounts and allocation of monies in specific areas would be covered in separate reports.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the Planning Department be requested to notify parishes prior to expiry of 106 contributions;
- (ii) Members be provided with a breakdown of the £2.6m in 106 contributions;
- (iii) Members be informed of how the money is held and what happens to the interest.

107 BARWELL AND EARL SHILTON WORKING GROUP – TERMS OF REFERENCE (SC17)

Members received a report which recommended the establishment of a Barwell and Earl Shilton Working Group and included draft Terms of Reference for approval.

Concern was expressed that the establishment of this group may take some responsibility away from the Town and Parish Councils, but it was stated that the objective of the group was to ensure democratic accountability of the Borough Council in its plans for Barwell and Earl Shilton, and that the Chairs of the Town and Parish Councils would be included in the process.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the establishment of a Barwell and Earl Shilton Working Group be endorsed;
- (ii) the Terms of Reference be agreed.

108 VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR CONSULTATION

Councillor Inman provided a verbal report of a meeting he had attended with regard to Leicestershire County Council's proposed changes to the financial support provided to voluntary organisations in the area. He explained that under the proposals there would be a county-wide organisation which would support the voluntary sector by assisting voluntary groups with applications for funding, providing advice on ICT, employment and governance. Whilst this organisation would not be run by the County Council, it would be an external organisation contracted by the County Council.

Members felt they needed further information about the proposals in order to discuss them fully, but expressed concern about the possibility of reduced funding for Voluntary Action Hinckley & Bosworth. It was noted that the consultation period would end on 29 July and agreed that a letter be sent to the County Council to express the Scrutiny Commission's concern. It was requested that a report be prepared for the next meeting of the Commission, with representatives of the County Council and voluntary sector invited to the meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the Scrutiny Commission's strong support for Voluntary Action be noted;
- (ii) representation be made to the County Council before the end of the consultation period to express the Scrutiny Commission's concern with regard to the proposals;
- (iii) a report be prepared to the next meeting of the Commission and representatives of the County Council and Voluntary Sector be invited to that meeting.

109 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09 (SC18)

Members gave consideration to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2008/09.

RESOLVED – the Work Programme be agreed.

Mr Ward left the meeting at 8.32pm.

110 FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL DECISIONS (SC19)

Members received the Forward Plan of Executive and Council decisions.

RESOLVED – the Forward Plan be noted.

111 MINUTES OF SELECT COMMITTEES / SCRUTINY PANELS

Minutes of the following meetings were received:

- (a) Council Services Select Committee, 29 May 2008 (SC20);
- (b) Finance and Audit Services Select Committee, 23 June 2008 (SC21);
- (c) Council Services Select Committee, 10 July 2008 (SC22).

RESOLVED – the minutes as noted above be received and noted.

(The meeting closed at 8.35 pm)