

HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

10 SEPTEMBER 2009 AT 6.30 PM

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

Mrs A Hall, MR DW Inman, Mr CG Joyce, Mr C Ladkin, Mr K Morrell, Mr BE Sutton and Mrs BM Witherford.

Peter Roffey, Chairman of the Combined Fire Authority and Ian Scarrott, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, attended the meeting.

Officers in attendance: Mr S Atkinson, Mrs T Darke, Ms E Grant, Miss L Horton, Mr S Kohli, Miss R Owen and Mrs S Stacey.

178 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Mr PR Batty, Mrs S Francks, Mr DM Gould and Mrs S Sprason.

179 MINUTES (SC13)

On the motion of Mrs Camamile, seconded by Mrs Hall, it was

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 30 July 2009 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman subject to the above amendment.

180 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mrs Camamile declared a personal interest in item 10 (The Introduction of an Older Persons Strategy for Hinckley & Bosworth) as Chairman of the Care and Repair Board.

181 PROPOSED CHANGES AT HINCKLEY FIRE STATION

Mr Roffey outlined the review that was currently being undertaken and explained that the aim was to work better within the resources available. He emphasised that the review would not lead to any cuts in service but would move resources around to give better overall coverage.

It was noted that any reduction in crew numbers would be due to redeployment and as a result there would be no service reduction and the response time to calls would be no slower. In addition to this, sickness levels had fallen dramatically within the Fire Service which resulted in more staff on duty and able to respond to emergencies.

Mr Roffey clarified that the recommendations in the review had been drawn up by the Chief Fire Officer who had operational knowledge and awareness of the needs in all parts of the Borough. It was noted that consultation would continue until 31 October 2009.

Mr Roffey and Mr Scarrott were thanked for their input and Members acknowledged the issues which had been presented to them and the means of response.

182 THE INTRODUCTION OF AN OLDER PERSONS STRATEGY FOR HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH (SC29)

The Scrutiny Commission was presented with the draft Older Persons Strategy which had been prepared by Councillor Inman. Members were asked to forward any comments on the draft to Councillor Inman by the end of September.

It was explained that each authority now had an Older Persons Champion, and there were also champions within the workforce, for example in hospitals. County Councillor Mr Sprason was campaigning for more Older Persons Champions and had also sent some information about safeguarding vulnerable adults, which would be circulated to Members of the Scrutiny Commission.

With regard to discrimination of older people in employment, it was suggested that any possible changes in law to allow people to work past 65 would be contentious as this would create less employment opportunities for young people.

Concern was expressed with regard to lack of funding for disabled adaptations in housing. It was also suggested that consideration be given when houses were built to installing adaptations at that stage, for example in bungalows for older people, which would save money on having to install them later. It was agreed that the Council Services Select Committee should look at this and the Executive should look at it as part of the LDF.

It was reported that a letter had been received from Age Concern Hinckley & Bosworth expressing disappointment that it had not been mentioned in the Older Persons Strategy, and contesting the suggestion that there should be a centre for Older People. Councillor Inman stated that he would include Age Concern in the Strategy.

RESOLVED – Council Services Select Committee be asked to consider any possible recommendations to the Executive with regard to the LDF and adapted accommodation.

183 DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS (SC27)

Members were informed of the position in respect of the Section 106 contributions that had not been spent within the 5 year period. £298.75 was at risk of being lost – this would have to be used by Barlestone Parish Council by 20 October.

A Member expressed concern that the rules regarding distance were still preventing some parishes from spending the money, and it was noted that the area had been broadened as stated in the SPD, and that although the developer could be approached to ask if the money could be used farther away, there would then be the risk of them asking to claw back the money. In response to a Member's question about reviewing the SPD, the Commission was reminded that this had been reviewed and regular reviews were timetabled over the next few years.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

Mr Ladkin left the meeting at 7.31pm.

184 HOUSING STRATEGY 2009-12 CONSULTATION (SC28)

The revised Housing Strategy for the period 2009 to 2012 which was out for consultation until 28 September was presented to the Scrutiny Commission. It was noted that in future there may be a move to a regional strategy.

Mr Ladkin returned at 7.35pm.

A Member asked if the strategy referred to the Climate Change policy and in response it was noted that reference was made to energy efficiency and depending on the outcome of the consultation it may be included in the action plan.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

185 PROGRESS ON MOTION SUPPORTED AT COUNCIL RE LOCAL AUTHORITIES BIDDING FOR SOCIAL HOUSING GRANTS

Members were informed that work was progressing as a result of the motion to Council on 29 July 2009. Work had been underway with a partner developer and a small scale bid for two properties would be submitted by the end of October.

186 CREDIT UNION (SC30)

Further to a request of the Scrutiny Commission on 30 July, a report was presented which informed Members of progress made in setting up credit union arrangement for Hinckley & Bosworth. It was stated that costs of setting up a credit union would be high and suggested that the best option would be to work with an existing credit union to provide services for both staff and residents. A presentation would be given to staff with regard to this, and appropriate locations to serve residents were being investigated. Peggs Close had been highlighted as a suitable location.

It was explained that there would be some costs to the Borough Council as a minimum of three volunteers would need to be recruited and trained and the General Manager would be part-funded by the Council. Officers stated they would shortly be contacting Voluntary Action Hinckley & Bosworth to ask for assistance in recruiting volunteers. It was further noted that the Credit Union

would become self-financing so any financial contribution would not be ongoing.

It was explained that the next stage would be to formulate a business case.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the report be noted;
- (ii) support be given to working with an existing credit union.

187 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009/10 TO 2011/12 (SC31)

Members were provided with an analysis of the Capital Programme 2009/10 to 2011/12 and were reminded of the recommendations of the Finance & Audit Services Select Committee that the Commission consider the future of the Council Offices site including Mount Road car park, the future of the depot site and including the crematorium site in the settlement boundary.

A Member expressed concern that Hollycroft Park was included in the general fund but as it served Hinckley it should be funded by the Special Expenses area. The inclusion of Hinckley Club for Young People in the general fund was also questioned as it was felt that this would serve only Hinckley. In response it was noted that the whole of the Borough would benefit and to support this transport to the site was being reviewed.

The apparent scaling back of the Environmental Improvement Scheme was questioned and in response it was noted that if funding was required by local Members, Managers would submit bids which would then be considered, and any schemes currently being worked on should be brought forward.

With regard to the recommendations of the Finance & Audit Services Select Committee, it was noted that at this stage the suggestion was only that each option be supported for investigation and that the Executive be asked to look at the suggestions in greater detail.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the report be noted;
- (ii) the proposals of the Finance & Audit Services Select Committee be supported and referred for investigation.

188 CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL UPDATE

It was noted that a joint meeting had been held with regard to concessionary travel and progress was being made.

189 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT (SC32)

Members were provided with a report which evaluated the effectiveness of the Member Development Strategy, examined progress towards achieving the East Midlands Councillor Development Charter, and provided information on Member Development Activities within the authority and throughout Leicestershire & Rutland as part of the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership.

The number of Borough Councillors who were also County Councillors was highlighted, and in response it was noted that districts were now working more closely with the County Council and this had therefore been taken into account.

RESOLVED – the report be noted and progress be endorsed.

190 OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCY COVER

Members were provided with a verbal update on the availability of officers outside of office hours, particularly bank holiday weekends. It was confirmed that arrangements were now in place for appropriate officers to be available at these times and good relationships had been built with parishes who were at risk of requiring such support.

191 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10 (SC33)

Members received the work programme for 2009/10.

RESOLVED – the work programme be agreed.

192 FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL DECISIONS (SC34)

Members received the Forward Plan of Executive and Council decisions.

RESOLVED – the Forward Plan be noted.

(The meeting closed at 8.55 pm)