

HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

20 MAY 2010 AT 6.30 PM

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

Mr PR Batty, Mr DM Gould, Mrs A Hall, Mr DW Inman, Mr K Morrell, Mr K Nichols, Mrs S Sprason, Mr BE Sutton and Mrs BM Witherford.

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

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.4 Mr R Ward also attended the meeting, and Messrs DC Bill and SL Bray were in attendance for item 8 on the invitation of the Commission.

Also in attendance: Sue Lock, Debbie Ridley and Helen Thompson of the Primary Care Trust.

14 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Mr Joyce.

15 MINUTES (SC1)

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

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 8 April 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

17 COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES REVIEW

Representatives of the PCT gave a presentation on 'Transforming Community Services', outlining the plans and consultation being undertaken. It was explained that there would be an out of hours minor injuries unit in Oadby which would operate between 8am and 8pm and would also offer routine procedures for example blood tests.

When discussing provision for Hinckley, it was stated that the intention was to encourage GP surgeries to extend their hours of opening. It was reported that consultation would be undertaken with regard to a minor injuries unit at Ashby Road hospital, and the Scrutiny Commission asked that they be included in that consultation.

A Member asked about the use of Section 106 monies, and it was agreed that the Local Health Board would be asked to respond to the Scrutiny Commission.

18 SCRUTINY REVIEW: WINTER GRITTING

Members were informed that a review of the gritting service was being undertaken by Leicestershire County Council and that an officer from the Borough Council (Michael Brymer, the relevant Chief Officer) would be involved in that review. Members were therefore asked to highlight issues of concern to be fed into the review. The following points were raised:

- The lack of co-ordination with Town and Parish Councils, who would be ideally placed to work with other authorities on the matter and would have storage space;
- The need for a protocol between parishes and districts;
- Concern that the supplies in grit boxes had been used within 24 hours of the poor weather starting and were not replenished;
- The need for clarification of responsibility for gritting certain areas, for example Castle Street, Hinckley;
- The need for a consistent approach to the management of gritting.

It was agreed that the progress of the review be reported back to the Scrutiny Commission every three months.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the abovementioned points be included in the review;
- (ii) the Scrutiny Commission be kept informed of the progress of the review on a three-monthly basis.

19 QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH THE LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER

The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council attended the meeting for a question and answer session. They spoke to a paper circulated at the meeting, giving details of achievements during 2009/10 and answered questions on several issues including the continued high performance of the Council, key capital projects, flexible working, successes in allocation of the Parish & Community Initiative Fund, affordable housing and disabled adaptations. The Scrutiny Commission thanked Mr Bray and Mr Bill for their attendance and responses.

Messrs Bill and Bray left at 8.05pm.

20 RURAL AREAS REVIEW (SC2)

The Scrutiny Commission received a report which informed Members of the outcomes of the annual rural areas review report 2009/10. Members were reminded that when they received the annual review the previous year, the majority of recommendations had been met and a revised approach had been requested.

Members expressed concern that whilst the actions in the report were positive for the rural areas, current planning laws and guidance were contrary to that and rural areas were suffering, for example with regard to transport.

It was suggested that the Head of Planning be invited to address these issues and rural members be invited to that meeting, and that a task and finish group be set up to look at rural planning issues.

RESOLVED – the Head of Planning be invited to the next meeting and subsequently a task and finish group be set up.

Messrs Crooks and Gould left the meeting at 8.38pm.

21 SCRUTINY REVIEW: REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS

The Chairman referred to the presentations made by the representatives of Housing Associations who attended the previous two Scrutiny Commission meetings and highlighted the main themes of the discussions, namely disabled adaptations, homelessness duties, linking with Neighbourhood Action Teams, accountability of the associations to their tenants and Member involvement.

Mr Gould returned at 8.42pm.

Members asked that this information be collated into a written report in order for recommendations to be agreed.

RESOLVED – a written report be brought to the next meeting.

22 PETITION SCHEME (SC3)

The Scrutiny Commission was provided with a report which outlined the new requirements for petitions and presented a proposed petition scheme.

Members expressed concern that the number of signatures required to call a Chief Officer to give evidence at a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission (750 signatures) or for the petition to be debated in Council (2,000 signatures) would prevent petitions relating to particular local issues benefiting from these provisions. It was recommended that the scheme be amended to state that for local issues (issues within a parish or town), the number of signatures required for an officer to give evidence at the Scrutiny Commission or for a petition to be debated in Council be proportional to the size of the electorate of that parish or town (calculated upon the same basis as recommended in the guidance and included in the draft scheme – 0.9% for an officer to give evidence and 2.34% for a debate in Council).

RECOMMENDED – Council approve the scheme with the abovementioned amendment to take account of smaller numbers of signatures in parishes.

23 DRAFT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10 AND WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11 (SC4)

Members received draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2009/10 and the draft Work Programme 2010/11. It was agreed that the reduction in waiting time for disabled adaptations and the agreement to carry forward the underspend in the Parish & Community Initiative Fund be included in the Annual report as successes of the Commission.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the work programme be agreed with the addition of items agreed at this meeting;
- (ii) the Annual Report be agreed with the abovementioned additions and RECOMMENDED for approval by Council.

24 FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL DECISIONS (SC5)

Members received the Forward Plan of Executive and Council decisions.

RESOLVED – the Forward Plan be noted.

25 MINUTES OF SELECT COMMITTEES

The minutes of the following meetings were received:

- (i) Council Services Select Committee, 1 April 2010 (SC6);
- (ii) Finance & Audit Services Select Committee, 12 April 2010 (SC7).

(The meeting closed at 9.10 pm)