

HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

1 JULY 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, 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 S Coop, Miss L Horton, Mr D Moore, Miss R Owen, Mrs S Stacey and Mr S Wood.

Also in attendance: Representatives of sub Post Offices in the Borough.

113 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Messrs Gould and Joyce.

114 MINUTES (SC8)

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

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

115 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

116 RESTRUCTURING OF CUSTOMER PAYMENT OPTIONS (SC9)

The Scrutiny Commission received a report which provided an update on the closure of the cash office and implementation of facilities to pay bills in cash at PayPoint outlets or by cash and debit cards at Post Offices.

Representatives of local sub post offices who were present at the meeting spoke in support of the ability to pay bills at the post office, stating that this would increase footfall and would be more convenient to those customers who already paid other bills by this method.

Concern was expressed with regard to the low number of Allpay outlets and post offices in rural villages, and this concern was acknowledged despite it being an improvement on current arrangements for payment which, other than by post or direct debit, would require residents coming to the cash office in

Hinckley.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the report be endorsed;
- (ii) the use of PayPoint and payment at Post Offices be encouraged and publicised including poster campaigns;
- (iii) the introduction of Allpay into Community Houses and Credit Unions in the borough be considered;
- (iv) a report be brought back in six months.

117 DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS (SC10)

Members were informed of the position in respect of the Section 106 contributions that had not been spent within the five year period and were at risk of being clawed back, and those that were beyond four years but not beyond five years. Discussion followed with regard to contributions to community health facilities, and Members were reminded that at the previous meeting an update to a future meeting had been requested from the Health Board.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

118 PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT APPEAL DECISIONS (SC11)

The Scrutiny Commission was informed of the Planning and Enforcement appeal determinations that had been made contrary to the decision of the Local Planning Authority.

A Member expressed disappointment with regard to an application on Coventry Road and concern with regard to related issues on the A5. In response Members were informed that there was an A5 working group with representatives from relevant agencies and an improvement plan was in place.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

119 COALITION GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS (SC12)

The Head of Planning presented a report which provided an update on information received from the Coalition Government including Regional Spatial Strategies, development in residential gardens and minimum densities. Some concern was expressed that removal of minimum densities and development in gardens would affect housing numbers, but it was acknowledged that it would help prevent over-development.

Mr Ladkin left the meeting at 7.49pm and returned at 8.52pm.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

120 PERFORMANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT AND CITIZENS' PANEL SURVEY REPORTS (SC13, 14 & 15)

Three reports on Performance Management and Corporate Planning Framework, Risk Management Framework end of year report and the Consultation results – Citizens' Panel survey winter 2009/10 were taken together and a presentation provided to highlight the main points of these.

Mr Morrell left at 7.57pm and returned at 8.03pm, Mr Batty left at 8.03pm.

A Member reminded the Commission that at last year's work programming workshop, it had been suggested that the authority should be comparing performance with the single best performing authority. In response it was explained that as the 'best' fluctuate, it was more beneficial to compare with other 'excellent' authorities. It was suggested that the Council Services Select Committee could look at key areas of performance and compare themselves with the best in those areas.

The future of recycling was discussed and a Member had some suggestions about issues including disposal of food waste, and material used for manhole covers. It was agreed that the relevant Chief Officer would be invited to comment on these issues.

Concern was expressed with regard to low satisfaction of the website, but it was explained that this was partly due to low usage figures, and that a new website was being developed which would be more user friendly.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the reports be noted and progress made be endorsed;
- (ii) the Council Services Select Committee be requested to undertake work to compare key performance indicators with the best performing authorities;
- (iii) comment with regard to disposal of food waste and recycling be passed onto the relevant Chief Officer.

121 SCRUTINY REVIEW: REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS (SC16)

The Scrutiny Commission was provided with a report which set out recommendations made at the previous meeting in order to conclude the review of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). In response to a Members' query it was explained that whilst the RSLs had no obligation to comply with the Commission's recommendations, they would be worded so as to insist on engagement with the authority.

RESOLVED – representatives of Midland Heart, Orbit and Waterloo Housing Group be thanked for their attendance and be RECOMMENDED to:

- (i) provide specific figures for the number of major adaptations provided along with the cost to this authority

in disabled facilities grants and to enter into further discussions with the Borough Council in order to regulate this arrangement;

- (ii) provide evidence of work to prevent homelessness and to improve communication with the Borough Council on homelessness issues;
- (iii) work more closely with the Neighbourhood Action Teams (NATs);
- (iv) provide evidence to the Borough Council on accountability to tenants and ensure customer service standards and performance targets mirror those of the Borough Council;
- (v) enable and encourage direct contact with Elected members and to invite a Member (via officers) to sit on a partnership board to allow input into issues that concern residents of the Borough.

122 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11 (SC17)

Members received Overview and Work Programme 2010/11 and were asked for any additions and suggestions for reviews in addition to those already agreed at this meeting. Suggestions were received as follows:

- Emergency Information Scheme;
- Use of money from Council Tax on second dwellings;
- Final agreement on Council Offices development;
- Progress update on Members' ICT;
- Public transport.

It was also requested that eligibility criteria in the Housing Allocations Policy be reviewed by the Council Services Select Committee.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the work programme be agreed with the addition of items agreed at this meeting;
- (ii) the abovementioned items be added into the work programme.

Mr Ladkin left the meeting at 8.40pm.

123 FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL DECISIONS (SC18)

Members received the Forward Plan of Executive and Council decisions.

RESOLVED – the Forward Plan be noted.

124 MINUTES OF SELECT COMMITTEES

The minutes of the following meetings were received:

- (i) Council Services Select Committee, 13 May 2010 (SC19);
- (ii) Finance & Audit Services Select Committee, 24 May 2010 (SC20).

(The meeting closed at 8.41 pm)