

HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

16 SEPTEMBER 2010 AT 6.30 PM

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

Mr JG Bannister, Mr PR Batty, Mr DM Gould, Mrs A Hall, Mr DW Inman, Mr CG Joyce, Mr C Ladkin, Mrs S Sprason, Mr BE Sutton and Ms BM Witherford.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.4 Mr WJ Crooks also attended the meeting.

Officers in attendance: Mr Michael Brymer, Mr B Cullen, Miss L Horton, Mrs B Imison, Miss R Owen, Mrs S Stacey and Mr S Wood.

204 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Mr Nichols.

205 MINUTES (SC29)

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 5 August 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

In response to a Member's question with regard to minute 162 (Members' ICT), it was reported that this item had been discussed informally by the Executive, and a written response from that body was requested.

206 ADDITIONAL URGENT BUSINESS BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

It was noted that due to the need to receive information on the proposed Shared Revenues and Benefits service before a decision being made by Council on 30 September, an additional item of business by way of a verbal presentation would be heard after item 5 on the agenda.

207 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

Mr Ladkin left the meeting at 6.35pm.

208 SHARED REVENUES AND BENEFITS PROJECT

Members received a verbal update on the project and heard that the authorities involved would each be making a decision on the provision of a

shared service by the end of September. It was reported that the recent information in the press with regard to job losses was misleading and that any reduction in the number of staff would be via voluntary redundancy or natural turnover.

Mr Gould arrived at 6.42pm.

A Member expressed concern about the savings when offset against the relocation cost of staff from three authorities moving into the Atkins Building, and it was noted that relocation costs had already been included in future budgets as part of the council offices relocation.

Mr Ladkin returned at 6.47pm.

209 BARWELL AND EARL SHILTON SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSION MASTERPLAN (SC32)

Members were presented with a report which informed them of progress of the Barwell & Earl Shilton Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) Masterplan. A Member asked if there had been a change in the number of houses planned for Earl Shilton, and in response it was noted that it stood at 1600 units but this might change depending on the outcome of the employment study and also on Severn Trent's plans with regard to disposal of the works site.

Concern was expressed about the employment study and that the SUE wouldn't be sustainable if there were no additional jobs provided. It was also requested that discussion be held with local Members to ensure local housing needs were met.

210 RURAL AREAS REVIEW: TRACKING OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS – LDF IN RURAL AREAS

Further to the recommendation made at the meeting of the Scrutiny Commission on 20 May 2010, Members were presented with a suggested scope for the Task and Finish Group to look at Planning Policy impacts on rural affairs. It was agreed that this should include:

- Farm diversification;
- Affordable housing;
- Rural transport;
- Rural services;
- Employment provision;
- Support of the agricultural economy;
- Safeguarding the character of rural areas;
- Gypsies and travellers;
- Status of hamlets.

Members were asked to contact the Democratic Services Officer if they wished to be on the Group.

211 HOUSING STRATEGY 2010-2013 (SC30)

Members received a report on the adoption of the Housing Strategy 2010 – 2013 which was considered by the Executive on 8 September.

Concern was expressed that local Members needed to be involved in assessing housing need and that opportunities to increase housing stock should be considered.

With regard to housing repairs, it was reported that due to an underspend the capacity for disabled adaptations had doubled and as a result the backlog would have been cleared by the end of September. This was highlighted as a success of the Commission and was noted for inclusion in the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report.

212 SCRUTINY REVIEW: REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS – TRACKING OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

It was reported that Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in the Hinckley & Bosworth area had been contacted and informed of the recommendations of the Scrutiny Commission's recent review and had been invited to a meeting in November to discuss how these recommendations could be implemented.

Mr Inman left the meeting at 7.25pm.

A Member highlighted a problem with regard to social housing in that landowners were reluctant to release land for that purpose as they were not able to act as a Registered Social Landlord so could not benefit from it. Officers agreed that this would be raised.

It was agreed that the outcome of the meeting with RSLs in November would be reported to the Scrutiny Commission.

Mrs Sprason left the meeting at 7.30pm.

213 UPDATE ON WINTER GRITTING REVIEW

Members were updated on the review into the winter gritting service which was being led by Leicestershire County Council with the input of officers from districts. A report had been considered by the County Council's Executive which recommended formalising arrangements so all agencies were aware who was responsible for gritting each area and for restocking salt bins. It was agreed that a further update would be brought to the next meeting of the Commission.

214 REVIEW OF WASTE COLLECTION SERVICES (SC31)

The Scrutiny Commission received a report which demonstrated how value for money had been achieved in Street Scene Services and outlined future developments in the waste collection service.

Mr Inman returned at 7.35pm.

Members congratulated all employees of the service for their hard work and for delivering a service which demonstrated excellent value for money. It was suggested that this be publicised. The street cleaning service was praised but it was requested that more work be done on educating people not to drop litter. It was agreed that an article be included in the Borough Bulletin to highlight the cost of a fixed penalty notice for litter and dog fouling and the warn people of the enforcement powers.

Mr Bannister left at 8.00pm.

Concern was expressed with regard to inadequate bin storage as part of new developments, and in response it was reported that the service was working closely with Planners on this.

RESOLVED –

- (i) a letter of congratulations be sent to all staff in the service;
- (ii) the value for money aspect of the service be publicised;
- (iii) an article on enforcement be published in the Borough Bulletin.

215 SCRUTINY REVIEW: TRANSPORT – SCOPING OF REVIEW (SC33)

Members received a report which provided a basis for scoping the review into transport. An end date for the review was agreed as 10 March 2011 and it was agreed that a working group be set up to look at the following:

- Town Centre Infrastructure (based on White Young Green's report);
- Sustainable Urban Extensions;
- Residential developments;
- Rural areas;
- Sustainable transport (including cycling);
- Public transport (including bus services).

It was felt that this work should feed into the Local Transport Plan (LTP3).

Members were asked to contact the Democratic Services Officer if they wished to be part of the working group.

RESOLVED –

- (i) a working group be set up to undertake the review;
- (ii) suitable external support be identified and the scrutiny budget be utilised for this;
- (iii) a timetable for the review be agreed at the next meeting of the Commission.

216 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT – ANNUAL REVIEW (SC34)

Members received an update on Member Development activity over the last 12 months and planned activities for the coming year. In addition to the activities outlined in the report, Members were reminded that the Leicestershire and Rutland Improvement Partnership had been a finalist for an MJ Award in the 'Councillor Development Achievement of the Year' category.

With regard to the 2011 Member Induction programme, a Member expressed concern with regard to the timing of training events. In response it was anticipated that the majority of events would take place in an evening, but also that candidates would be informed of dates and times when their nomination was received to allow them to plan for attendance at the event around other commitments.

217 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11 (SC35)

Members received the Work Programme for 2010/11. The following additions were agreed:

- Review of progress of Voluntary Action Hinckley & Bosworth;
- Update from the civic facilities working group.

RESOLVED – the work programme be agreed with the abovementioned inclusions and any additions agreed at this meeting.

218 FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL DECISIONS (SC36)

Members received the Forward Plan of Executive and Council decisions.

RESOLVED – the Forward Plan be noted.

219 MINUTES OF SELECT COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

The minutes of the following meetings were received:

- (i) Council Services Select Committee, 29 July 2010 (SC37);
- (ii) Finance & Audit Services Select Committee, 2 August 2010 (SC38).

(The meeting closed at 8.20 pm)