

HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

20 JANUARY 2011 AT 6.30 PM

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

Mr DM Gould, Mrs A Hall, Mr DW Inman, Mr C Ladkin, Mr K Nichols, Mrs S Sprason, Mr R Ward and Ms BM Witherford.

Officers in attendance: Mr Michael Brymer, Mr D Bunker, Mr B Cullen, Mr S Coope, Miss L Horton, Miss R Owen and Mr S Wood.

417 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Mr Bannister, Mr Batty, Mr Joyce, Mr Morrell and Mr Sutton, with the substitution of Mr Ward for Mr Sutton authorised in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.3.

418 MINUTES (SC59)

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

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

419 ADDITIONAL URGENT BUSINESS BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Mr Brymer, Chief Officer Business, Contracts and Street Scene Services, was in attendance to provide a verbal update on the changes to the refuse and recycling collections. This was considered urgent as the changes had been implemented that week and issues had only just come to light.

It was reported that there had been some confusion in areas where there had been a change to the timetable but that when this became apparent staff had started informing residents door to door in advance where possible.

Mr Ladkin arrived at 6.34pm and Mr Ward arrived at 6.35pm.

With regard to the delay in delivery of some of the new blue bags, it was stated that temporary bags had been issued but the supply and preparation of these had come at a cost for which there had been no budget.

Mr Gould arrived at 6.38pm.

It was reported that the hire of an additional wheeled bin for mixed recycling had been popular.

420 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

421 PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT APPEAL DECISIONS (SC60)

Members received a report which informed them of the planning and enforcement appeal determinations which had been made contrary to the decision of the Local Planning Authority. It was noted that there had been thirteen appeals since the last report, of which seven had been allowed, which was an improvement on the previous report. It was reported that the Planning Committee had recommended that work be undertaken with the Highways Authority to encourage them to get involved in applications earlier in the process and to robustly challenge their comments to ensure they are able to sustain their objections at appeal.

Mr Ladkin and Mr Ward left the meeting at 6.49pm.

It was highlighted that recently there didn't appear to be a pattern of appeals being lost where an officer recommendation had been overturned by Members.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

Mr Ladkin and Mr Ward returned at 6.53pm.

422 DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS (SC61)

The Scrutiny Commission was informed of the position in respect of the Section 106 Contributions that had not been spent within the five year period and contained a five year claw back clause, and those that were over four years old but not beyond five years. Progress on seeking commitments to spend outstanding contributions was highlighted.

Concern was expressed with regard to the difficulty in enforcing conditions, and in response it was stated that a spreadsheet was being compiled in order to monitor this. Members also expressed concern that the Section 106 forum had not met for some time, and it was agreed that a meeting of this group be convened.

423 RESTRUCTURING OF PAYMENT OPTIONS (SC62)

Mr Gould, Mr Ladkin and Mr Nichols left the meeting at 7.05pm with Mr Nichols returning at 7.06pm.

Further to a report to a previous meeting, Members received an update on the implementation of new payment options following the closure of the cash

office. It was reported that the changes had been successful with positive feedback and only one complaint. In response to a Member's question, the Commission was informed that the cashiers had now been incorporated into the Accountancy team to continue to deal with the payments which were now being received by alternative methods.

Mr Gould returned at 7.10pm and Mr Ladkin returned at 7.13pm.

A Member reported that Burbage Post Office had increased business since the implementation of the new payment options, but had asked about the possibility of having a swipe card to assist with payment, as is currently supplied to some council tenants. Various suggestions were discussed and officers agreed to look into the possibilities of this.

#### 424 SPECIAL EXPENSES AREA (SC63)

The Commission was reminded that the Council Services Select Committee had asked for information on the functions of the Special Expenses Area and use of the budget and on considering a report had asked for further information. Due to the nature of the information and the potential overlap with the remit of the Finance & Audit Services Select Committee, it was requested by the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen that this report be brought to the Scrutiny Commission.

Members discussed the history of the Special Expenses Area and parishes and the inequity with regard to capital funding, which was due to accounting regulations. Some Members felt that residents in rural areas were paying their parish precept and towards some expenditure in the Special Expenses Area, whilst Hinckley residents had access to facilities not easily accessible to those from outside of the urban area.

The possibility of Hinckley having a Town Council was discussed, and it was acknowledged that this would be a long process, and that it would not be a Council decision but had to be driven by the community, with the Secretary of State having the final decision. The possibility of the Wards or communities within Hinckley being defined separately rather than the entire Special Expenses Area becoming an administrative area was also considered.

It was requested that the matter be investigated further, including the relevant parts of the Localism Bill in order to understand the benefits of parishes, and a scrutiny review be scoped in the 2011-12 Work Programme with a view to the issue being debated by Council.

RESOLVED – the matter be investigated further.

#### 425 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11 (SC64)

Members received the Work Programme for 2010/11. Concern was expressed that the cycle of meetings would not allow for the Scrutiny Commission to consider the budget and it was requested that an alternative way for the Commission to receive the budget be considered.

It was also requested that an update from the Transport Working Group be included in the work programme for March.

RESOLVED – the work programme be agreed with the abovementioned inclusions.

426 FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL DECISIONS (SC65)

Members received the Forward Plan of Executive and Council decisions.

RESOLVED – the Forward Plan be noted.

427 MINUTES OF SELECT COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

The minutes of the following meetings were received:

- (i) Council Services Select Committee, 16 December 2010 (SC66);
- (ii) Finance & Audit Services Select Committee, 20 December 2010 (SC67).

428 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting be changed from 10 March to Wednesday, 9 March 2011.

(The meeting closed at 8.00 pm)