

HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

9 MARCH 2011 AT 6.30 PM

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

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

Officers in attendance: Mr Michael Brymer, Mr R Crosthwaite, Ms L Fray, Miss L Horton, Miss R Owen and Mr S Wood.

507 **MINUTES (SC68)**

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

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

508 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared at this stage.

509 **UPDATE ON RECYCLING SERVICE**

Members were provided with an update on the new refuse and recycling arrangements. It was reported that there had been problems with the dry recycling service due to training issues, increased tonnages collected and need for additional vehicle capacity. However the contractor had employed two additional crews and vehicles. It was also reported that the wheeled recycling bins had been very well received and 3,200 had been rented so far, with a further 800 on order.

Mr Gould entered the meeting at 6.42pm.

The Chief Officer (Business, Contract & Streetscene Services) and his team were thanked for their hard work.

Mr Morrell entered the meeting at 6.47pm.

510 **CONTACT CENTRE / CUSTOMER SERVICES (SC69)**

In response to a request of the Council Services Select Committee, the Scrutiny Commission was presented with a report which provided an update on current performance and recent challenges facing customer services. In presenting this report it was highlighted that a customer survey had indicated

that callers were willing to wait 45 seconds for their call to be answered, hence the reason for setting this as the target. It was also reported that whilst waiting for their call to be answered there was a recorded message playing which listed alternative options for contacting the Council, making payments etc.

Some of the events that had led to increased number of calls during January 2011 (an increase from 15,000 attempted calls in an average month to 24,000 in January 2011) were outlined including the new recycling service, confusion with regard to refuse and recycling calendars, and the training of new staff.

In response to a Member's query it was reported that the closure of the cash office had not led to an increase in calls to the contact centre and had not resulted in negative feedback.

511 PRIMARY CARE TRUST (PCT) AND SECTION 106 CONTRIBUTIONS (SC70)

Members were informed of the position in respect of the PCT Section 106 contributions that had been collected by HBBC but not spent by the PCT. Discussion ensued on the future demise of PCTs and it was noted that the issue was complex and would be addressed with GP Boards once these were set up.

Further concern was expressed with regard to the closure of pharmacies in villages and whether Section 106 monies could be used to safeguard some of these pharmacies. In response it was considered unlikely but officers were happy to raise the issue in the relevant forum.

512 SCRUTINY TRANSPORT REVIEW WORKING GROUP UPDATE (SC71)

The Commission was provided with an update on the Transport Scrutiny Review. It was stated that the comments of the working group were included at the end of the appendix to the report.

Members expressed concerns with regard to the Highways Agency not having funding to undertake necessary works, the need for developer contributions to travel plans and transport and the requirement to resolve traffic problems on the A5. With regard to Hinckley Town Centre, concern was raised that whilst needs had been acknowledged, there were no plans for safe pedestrian access from the bus station site to the town centre and no planned cycle routes. Officers stated that there was a meeting arranged with regard to the A5 and pressure would be put on the Highways Agency, however it was also reported that the Highways Agency had warned of potential severe reductions in improvements to road networks and public transport as a result of budget cuts.

A Member suggested that it would be useful to discuss these issues and request attendance from agencies at the Highways Forum.

It was agreed that the working group be requested to continue to look at transport across the Borough and that this be built into the work programme including the opportunity to invite the relevant agencies to discuss Members' concerns.

RESOLVED – the working group be requested to continue.

513 FLEXIBLE WORKING UPDATE (SC72)

Members were provided with an update on the flexible working project, including the numbers of staff taking part in flexible working arrangements (five home workers, one mobile worker, two term-time workers and 43 mixed base). In response to Members' concerns at the previous meeting with regard to officers working from home and not being contactable, it was noted that the problem was with those working at home on an ad hoc basis, rather than contractual home workers.

Mr Morrell left the meeting at 7.24pm and returned at 7.27pm.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- Technical issues for home workers could be dealt with remotely;
- Most staff were eligible to apply for flexible working;
- Performance information for home workers was not available for teams other than housing benefits. Officers agreed to obtain this information and bring it back to the Commission;
- There were no additional costs of supervision or quality control of those staff working from other locations as all staff were managed in the same way regardless of location;
- Home workers still interacted with other staff in team meetings and by regular 'phone and email contact;
- Home working was not an alternative to paid childcare.

It was agreed that the situation be monitored.

514 LOCALISM BILL (SC73)

Members were provided with an update on the progress of the Localism Bill, and it was noted that the government was taking steps to remove unnecessary specific duties on local authorities, such as the prescribed way of dealing with petitions and hosting e-petition facilities.

515 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11 (SC74)

Members received the Work Programme for 2010/11.

RESOLVED – the work programme be agreed.

516 FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL DECISIONS (SC75)

Members received the Forward Plan of Executive and Council decisions.

RESOLVED – the Forward Plan be noted.

517 MINUTES OF SELECT COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

The minutes of the following meetings were received:

- (i) Council Services Select Committee, 10 February 2011 (SC76);
- (ii) Finance & Audit Services Select Committee, 14 February 2011 (SC77).

(The meeting closed at 7.44 pm)