

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL
JOINT MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION AND
FINANCE & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY

6 FEBRUARY 2020 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr MR Lay - Chairman
Mr C Ladkin and Mr P Williams – Vice-Chairmen

Mr JMT Collett, Mr DS Cope, Mrs MJ Crooks, Mr SM Gibbens, Mr K Morrell,
Mrs LJ Mullaney, Ms A Pendlebury, Mr MC Sheppard-Bools, Mr R Webber-Jones and
Mr HG Williams

Also in attendance: Councillor AC Furlong and Councillor KWP Lynch

Officers in attendance: Tan Ashraf, Julie Kenny, Rebecca Owen and Ashley Wilson

301 MINUTES

It was moved by Councillor Webber-Jones, seconded by Councillor P Williams and

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2019 be
confirmed and signed by the chairman.

302 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared

303 GENERAL FUND BUDGET

Members received the general fund budget for 2020/21. During presentation of the report and discussion thereon, the following points were noted:

- The Medium Term Financial Strategy would be presented later in the year when the government settlement had been announced – in the meantime, the current version was still valid
- The need for additional narrative for some parts of the document, in particular large variances
- Two new reserves had been created for the crematorium and environmental action
- There were sufficient resources in the Developing Communities Fund to fund those projects already committed.

The report was noted.

304 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

The commission gave consideration to the housing revenue account for 2020/21. It was noted that there was planned investment in stock and a separate report on that would be brought later in the year. The impact of the HRA subsidy buyout was explained for newer members.

In relation to a query about the increase in employee costs, it was explained that this was due to previous vacancy savings, the impending national pay award and annual pay point increases.

A member highlighted the need to consider a reserve for future initiatives such as alternatives to boilers in properties.

The report was noted.

305 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The capital programme for 2019/20 to 2022/23 was presented to members. During discussion and in response to members questions, the following points were noted:

- In relation to the heritage action zone, some funding would be forthcoming from English Heritage and from the special expenses area budget – it was agreed that some narrative would be included in the report to Council
- The crematorium project had experienced some delays but the procurement process for the construction was now underway and the programme was on track subject to contractor availability
- The parish & community initiative fund had been increased for a year but the additional amount had remained unspent so the budget had been reduced to its former level
- The planned project to improve Barwell shop fronts had concluded, hence the reduction in funding in the budget
- Funding had not been drawn down from the Hinckley community development fund as governance arrangements had not been finalised.

The report was noted.

306 FEES AND CHARGES

The scale of fees and charges was presented to members. In relation to Building Control, members wished to understand the position of the service and the reasons for increasing the charges. It was agreed that the chairman and vice-chairmen would discuss and schedule a report for the most appropriate scrutiny body. It was noted that the new Building Control shared service was working well.

Concern was expressed that taxi drivers' costs were already high so to increase the charges further would have a negative impact on them. In response it was suggested that the increase may be statutory but officers agreed to check and advise members outside of the meeting.

It was noted that the market stall fees were proposed to be reduced to retain existing and encourage new stallholders.

An error in the report was noted in relation to the charge for allotments which would be amended in the final version for Council.

The report was noted.

307 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

A report was received which outlined the council's prudential indicators and set out the expected treasury operations. A member asked whether Block C income was included in the commercial estates income and it was confirmed that this would be looked into.

The report was noted.

308 CAPITAL STRATEGY

The Capital Strategy for 2019/20 to 2022/23 was presented. It was noted that the information contained within it was covered by other reports but that there was a requirement to present it in this way too although it may be combined with the capital programme report when presented to Council.

The report was noted.

309 REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

Members received the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' Allowances which recommended no increase in basic allowances or special responsibility allowances (SRAs) but recommended a future review of SRAs, clarification of approved duties and that the Council reviews members' ICT and the committee structure.

The report was noted.

310 SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was considered and the following items were requested for future meetings:

- Building Control (as already discussed)
- Enforcement against illegal incursions
- Block C of the Crescent.

(The Meeting closed at 8.24 pm)

CHAIRMAN