

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

19 APRIL 2012 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr MR Lay - Chairman
Mr PAS Hall and Mr C Ladkin – Vice-Chairman

Mr PR Batty, Mrs WA Hall, Mrs L Hodgkins, Mr DW Inman, Mr JS Moore (for Mr Bessant), Mr K Morrell, Mr K Nichols, Mrs S Sprason and Miss DM Taylor

Also in attendance: Councillor DC Bill MBE

Officers in attendance: Bill Cullen, Louisa Horton, Rebecca Owen, Paul Scragg, Sharon Stacey, Clive Taylor and Simon Wood

500 CHAIRMAN

Due to the late arrival of the Chairman, it was agreed that Councillor Mr Hall, as Vice-Chairman, take the chair for the first part of the meeting.

501 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillor Bessant with the substitution of Councillor Moore authorised in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.1.

502 MINUTES

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2012 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

503 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Batty, Moore and Morrell declared a personal interest in item 10 – Parish and Community Initiative Fund, as Members of Parish Councils that had submitted requests for funding.

504 CARE FOR PEOPLE SUFFERING WITH DEMENTIA

Councillor Ladkin arrived at 6.46pm.

Jim Bosworth, Jane Forbes, Jane Thorpe and Pamela Wills were in attendance to speak and answer questions about their experience either working with or caring for people with dementia. During discussion the following key points were raised:

- The need for GPs to have a greater understanding of and ability to identify (but not diagnose) dementia;
- Support for respite care was currently in the planning phase;
- Numbers of people with dementia were increasing – partly due to the ageing population and partly due to a greater awareness of and ability to diagnose early onset dementia;
- The need to raise awareness of dementia amongst particular age groups to enable spouses to identify if a problem may exist in order to receive support at an earlier stage.

The witnesses were thanked for their attendance and valuable input into the review.

505 HIGHWAYS

Councillor Lay, having arrived at 7.15pm, took the chair at this juncture.

Paul Sheard and Kingsley Cook from Leicestershire County Council's Highways department attended the meeting at the request of the Commission. Members asked questions regarding the role as statutory consultee on planning applications, data and information on which they based their recommendations, policies regarding applications for development in rural areas, transport modelling regarding the SUEs, and cycling and pedestrian links. During discussion the following points were clarified by the attendees:

- Recommendations of the Highways team on a planning application may be amended as a result of discussion with a developer or the developer agreeing to undertake works as a result of the original recommendation that the application be refused on highways grounds;
- New developments in rural areas and villages may be recommended for refusal on highways grounds due to the lack of transport links. This had become more important with an ageing population as public transport would be required for those who were no longer able to drive;
- The SUEs were supported on the basis of good transport, pedestrian and cycle links;
- Transport modelling for the future was based on the assumption of the cost of public transport increasing and the trend towards using cars.

Mr Cook and Mr Sheard suggested that it may be useful for them to attend a meeting of the Planning Committee to explain their policies. They also acknowledged the need to explain their views more clearly when providing a response to a planning application.

The representatives were thanked for their attendance and for their comprehensive answers to the questions.

506 COMMUNITY SAFETY 6 MONTH UPDATE

Inspector Rich Ward attended the meeting to update on crime statistics along with the relevant Chief Officer who presented partnership information and updates. It was noted that there had been a decrease in crime and that the use of Facebook had also been beneficial in disseminating information which had led to arrests.

Concern was expressed regarding the rumour that community policing was under threat due to reduction in funding for PCSOs. In response Inspector Ward explained that they were reviewing delivery but rather than reducing the number of PCSOs, due to the success of the scheme they planned to increase the presence of PCSOs and expand their remit to deal with non-emergency offences.

Members also expressed concern that the working relationship amongst the partners may be impacted by the election of Police & Crime Commissioners and asked that it be made clear that the success in reducing crime locally was due to the work of the partnership.

Thanks were extended to Inspector Ward, the Police, the Chief Officer, team and partners for their work.

507 POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS, PCC ELECTIONS AND THE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Members received a report which informed them of the elections for Police & Crime Commissioners and the proposed panels which would follow the election. The most crucial point to note was the voting system to be used.

Following on from discussion on the previous item, Members were concerned that the new Police & Crime Commissioner may wish to move away from the current partnership arrangement. It was also suggested that the representative for this area may be from a different part of the county and may not have an awareness of the needs of each area and as a result resources may be mis-directed.

It was agreed that any new information received would be brought back to the Commission.

508 PARISH AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVE FUND

The Scrutiny Commission was presented with a report which outlined changes to the way applications for funding were judged following a recent consultation exercise and included recommendations for the allocation of the fund.

Members were presented with a revised report and appendix following comments received on the original.

At this juncture Councillors Lay and Sprason declared a personal interest in the item as applications had been submitted by their Parish Council.

Councillor Ladkin left the meeting at 9.24pm.

A Member expressed concern with regard to a particular application and officers agreed to look again and ensure the information received was valid.

509 EXTENSION OF MEETING

Having reached 9.28pm, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 it was

RESOLVED – the meeting be allowed to continue to consider all business on the agenda.

510 WIND TURBINE POLICY POSITION

A report had been prepared following the request of the Commission to consider the policy position regarding wind turbines. It was suggested that this had now been superseded by the motion to Council on 17 April 2012 which referred the matter to the Planning Committee. It was agreed that the matter be brought back to the Commission following consideration by the Planning Committee.

Members were reassured that the stance of the NPPF with regard to wind turbines was similar to our saved policy so whilst there was a clear need to give consideration to the matter, the need wasn't urgent as there were policies in place.

RESOLVED – a report on wind turbines be brought back to the Commission following consideration by the Planning Committee.

511 S106 CONTRIBUTIONS

A regular report on developer contributions was presented to the Commission and whilst concern was expressed that there were some large amounts which had not been claimed it was acknowledged that it was often drawn down at the last minute.

In response to a Member's query, it was agreed that a spreadsheet showing to whom sums were due would be sent to Members and that this would also be included in future reports.

512 PLANNING APPEAL DECISIONS

The Commission was presented with a regular update on planning appeal decisions. It was

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

513 SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2011-12

Some Members questioned the reason for calling an additional meeting on 26 April to receive a presentation on the NPPF. In response it was stated that, whilst it was a planning issue, it was within the remit of the Scrutiny Commission to request and receive information on such subjects of public and general interest and that all Members were invited. It was suggested that the matter should also be presented to the Planning Committee.

514 DATES OF MEETINGS 2012/13

Members were reminded that at Council on 23 February it was agreed that the Scrutiny Commission would be asked to consider and agree dates for its meetings in June/July/August. It was noted that these would be held on 28 June and 23 August.

515 FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL DECISIONS

The following items were requested to come to the Scrutiny Commission prior to a decision being made by the Executive or Council:

- Discounted open market properties;
- Green Wedge policy;
- Barwell & Earl Shilton Area Action Plan;
- Argents Mead;
- Leisure Centre.

(The Meeting closed at 9.58 pm)

CHAIRMAN