

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

23 AUGUST 2012 AT 6.30 PM

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

Mr PR Batty, Mr Bessant, Mrs L Hodgkins, Mr MS Hulbert, Mr DW Inman, Mr K Morrell, Mrs S Sprason and Miss DM Taylor (for Mr K Nichols)

Also in attendance: Councillor JS Moore

Officers in attendance: Steve Atkinson, Michael Brymer, Bill Cullen, Rachel Dexter, Edwina Grant, Louisa Horton, Rebecca Owen, Sally Smith, Sharon Stacey and Simon Wood

126 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs Hall and Councillor Nichols with the substitution of Councillor Taylor for Councillor Nichols authorised in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.1.

127 MINUTES

On the motion of Councillor Batty, seconded by Councillor Hulbert, it was

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2012 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

128 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

129 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

Councillor Ladkin arrived at 6.34pm.

The Commission received a report which outlined the Environmental Improvement Programme for 2012/13. Members queried whether there had been a reduction in resources for the projects. In response it was reported that funding had not been reduced and it was agreed that a year end update would be provided.

130 FIRST SIX MONTHS OF INTERNAL HOUSING REPAIRS SERVICE

Members were presented with a statement on the progress made since bringing the Housing Repairs service in house in September 2011. Members were reminded that there had been some teething problems due to the previous contractor causing confusion regarding staff transfers and also not completing jobs as agreed. The Commission was pleased to hear that the cost of the service had, even in the first six months, reduced – despite transfer costs. Other successes highlighted included an increase in the number of jobs completed, a reduction in recalls by almost 50%, achieving all targets, and that the backlog of void works had now been returned to normal timescales.

It was agreed that an end of year update be brought to the November meeting. Members requested that their congratulations be passed on to all staff and management.

131 CREDIT UNION PROVISION - PROGRESS REPORT

The Scrutiny Commission was provided with an update on the local Credit Union provision. It was reported that there would be no longer be drop-in sessions in Hinckley, but scheduled appointments would be available. It was anticipated that this would allow the local Manager to concentrate on marketing. Members asked questions about the services provided by Clockwise and the take up.

Concern was expressed that the problem of doorstep lenders was ever prevalent and also that Christmas Clubs would soon become a problem again. It was suggested that Members receive presentations on the work of Clockwise and how to enable the public to benefit from the services, and also that the Parishes Forum may find a presentation useful in order to provide a link with rural areas.

Representatives of Clockwise were thanked for their work in this Borough.

132 THE DISTRICT, LOCAL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE REVIEW 2012

Members were informed of the results of the District, Local and Neighbourhood Centre review which would be used to inform the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD. It was explained that the review would help to draft policies to retain a mixture of uses in centres.

Members questioned the vacancy rate in business units and also expressed concern that some businesses started in Barwell or Earl Shilton, where rents were lower, then moved on when they had become more successful.

The outcomes of this review were noted and endorsed for use as part of the evidence base for the production of Local Plan policies and Development Plan documents.

133 ASSESSMENT OF NEW GREEN WEDGES TOPIC PAPER AND STATEMENT ON THE CONSISTENCY OF THE GREEN WEDGE DESIGNATION WITH THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Members were informed of the Assessment of New Green Wedges Topic Paper, outlining new suggestions that had arisen through consultation events. It was reported that none of the areas assessed had met all four criteria to be designated as green wedges, but that did not mean they wouldn't be protected under existing policies. It was agreed that further information on the assessments would be circulated separately.

A revised recommendation was tabled following consideration of the report by the Executive.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the Scrutiny Commission endorses the topic paper to be used as part of the evidence base for the submission version of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document and the Statement to support the green wedge designation;
- (ii) in order to reflect the significance and importance of the areas identified within the topic paper, Executive be RECOMMENDED to seek to provide the maximum protection to them by the most

appropriate and robust means, provided they are in accordance with existing policies and requirements in the adopted Development Plan.

134 SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2011-12

The work programme for the remainder of 2012/13 was discussed and the following suggestions were made:

- Notes of the Renewable Energy Working Group be included on the Scrutiny Commission agenda for information;
- Invite Police in to discuss neighbourhood policing as the situation seemed to differ from the assurances received prior to the reallocation of resources;
- Work on linking colleges with industry / creating employment for the area – it was noted that work was currently underway and should be completed by the end of the financial year, at which point it may be possible to invite representatives from the LEP, key stakeholders, MIRA and North Warwickshire and Hinckley College;
- Impact of the bus station on the town centre, inviting the Tin Hat Regeneration Partnership to give evidence;
- Invite highways representatives again to discuss use of government funding in the Borough;
- Leisure Centre (programmed for November);
- Dog fouling;
- Accessibility of public transport to people with disabilities.

135 DEMENTIA REVIEW - FORMULATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Members received a report which summarised the findings of the review so far and provided a reminder of areas for recommendations. It was reported that the Strategic Needs Assessment contained a chapter on Dementia and work was being undertaken to prioritise the actions.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- Whilst Wardens in sheltered schemes received training on dementia, this should ideally be provided to more HBBC staff, for example the Contact Centre, who come into contact with the public most regularly;
- An e-learning module could be designed to provide training to all staff and Members;
- Work was already undertaken to signpost services, but research should be undertaken into whether an information pack for dementia sufferers and carers was available or whether HBBC could seek support in producing one;
- Links to GPs would be made through Hinckley's Health & Wellbeing partnership.

Councillor Bessant arrived at 8.09pm.

It was noted that the final report would be brought to the next meeting of the Commission.

136 ADDITIONAL ITEM: BARWELL & EARL SHILTON SCRUTINY GROUP

A Member of the above group reported that Severn Trent Water had not been able to attend or provide information for the group and asked that a request to attend a meeting or to meet on site be sent by the Scrutiny Commission. It was also requested that the matter be raised with the local MP.

137 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:

- Argents Mead;
- Leisure Centre.

(The Meeting closed at 8.25 pm)

CHAIRMAN