

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

28 JULY 2022 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Cllr MR Lay - Chairman
Cllr C Ladkin and Cllr P Williams – Vice-Chairman
Cllr DS Cope, Cllr MJ Crooks, Cllr L Hodgkins, Cllr K Morrell, Cllr LJ Mullaney
(for Cllr MC Sheppard-Bools), Cllr A Pendlebury and Cllr R Webber-Jones

Also in attendance: Councillor KWP Lynch

Officers in attendance: Malcolm Evans, Julie Kenny, Stephen Meynell, Rebecca Owen, Sharon Stacey and Ashley Wilson

87. **Apologies and substitutions**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Collett and Sheppard-Bools with the substitution of Councillor L Mullaney for Councillor Sheppard-Bools authorised in accordance with council procedure rule 10.

88. **Minutes**

It was moved by Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Pendlebury and

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 9 June be confirmed as a correct record.

89. **Declarations of interest**

Councillor Webber-Jones declared an interest in the item “Job & skills works and sector shortage skills” as he worked in the skills area.

90. **Job & skills work and sector skills shortages**

Members received a presentation about employment and skills which provided information about the Employment and Skills Taskforce, local employment statistics, labour shortages, work underway locally in partnership with other agencies, apprenticeships and the Primary Engineer programmes. A representative of Primary Engineer was in attendance. During discussion, the following points were raised:

- Whilst the figures showed job vacancies in the borough, there were barriers such as travel due to the rural nature of the borough. It was felt this was a national problem and with rural bus services being cut back even further, the problem would worsen
- Participation in the Primary Engineer programme could be presented as evidence in an Ofsted inspection – it had been previously commended as a new way of bringing careers-focussed education into schools

- The need to simplify the qualifications system (for example apprenticeships levies, T-levels) due to its overly complex nature, and the risk of it becoming more complicated with the shared prosperity fund
- The need to strengthen the relationship between schools and promoting STEM subjects.

Councillor Cope left the meeting at 7.10pm.

In response to questions, it was agreed that more information would be sought on the following matters:

- The location of job vacancies in relation to the location of unemployment benefit and universal credit claimants to assist members in understanding the reasons for the consistently high number of vacancies
- Clarification in relation to the definition of those unable to work.

91. **Social housing demand**

Members received an update on current social housing demand and the housing allocations policy. During discussion, reference was made to:

- The high level of demand for housing and lack of understanding by applicants about the limitations the council has
- The high number of social housing properties acquired through new developments – it was agreed that data on the number of completions and time taken to let them would be provided
- The decline in availability of private rented properties, figures for which were requested
- A report on the cost of living crisis which would come to the next meeting.

92. **Economic Regeneration Strategy 2021 - 2025**

The Scrutiny Commission received an update on the work undertaken over the previous year to fulfil the aims of the Economic Regeneration Strategy 2021 to 2025. It was agreed that the action plan and monitoring document would be circulated to members.

In response to a member's question, it was noted that there may be opportunities within the UK shared prosperity fund to bring forward commercial units.

A member commented that some restaurants within the Crescent development hadn't looked after the plants outside their units and there was no greenery in the way of trees or hanging baskets. Members were reminded that the site was in private ownership and it was agreed that the conditions on the planning consent would be looked into and comments would be passed back to the owner.

The report was noted.

93. **Heritage Strategy 2018-2023 action plan update**

An update on work undertaken to fulfil the aims and objectives of the Heritage Strategy action plan was provided. Members highlighted the importance of heritage and conservation and of ensuring resources remained available.

A member mentioned the Desford Heritage Festival which had been well received in the village and suggested that contact be made with the organisers.

The council's work on heritage was commended.

94. **Scrutiny Commission Work Programme**

During discussion on the work programme, a member reminded the meeting of a previous request to look at preservation of ancient hedgerows. It was reported that a briefing on this had been requested.

Members were updated that the report of the working group reviewing the planning service would be brought to the next meeting.

In response to concerns about cost and availability of fuel for vulnerable people over the winter, it was noted that this would be included in the cost of living report which would be brought to the following meeting. It was requested that any work undertaken be shared with parish clerks and be placed on the agenda for the Parish Forum.

95. **Matters from which the public may be excluded**

On the motion of Councillor Williams seconded by Councillor Ladkin, it was

RESOLVED – in accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3, 5 and 10 of Part I of Schedule 12A of that Act.

96. **Crematorium update**

An update on the crematorium project was provided for members following delays due to ground conditions. It was noted that monitoring was being undertaken. Members asked for a further update at the earliest opportunity and noted the report.

(The Meeting closed at 8.18 pm)

CHAIRMAN