

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

27 OCTOBER 2011 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 (In place of Mr Bessant), Mr K Morrell, Mr K Nichols, Mrs S Sprason and Miss DM Taylor

Officers in attendance: Steve Atkinson, Rachel Burgess, Sally Ann Kempin, Alison Ker, Tracy Miller, Caroline Roffey and Sharon Stacey

216 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Mr Bessant, with Mr Moore substituting in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.3

217 MINUTES

Mrs Hall stated that she was in attendance at the previous meeting, which was not recorded in the minutes. On the motion of Mr Hall, seconded by Miss Taylor, it was

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2011 be confirmed subject to the above amendment and signed by the Chairman.

218 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

219 PRESENTATION BY VOLUNTARY ACTION LEICESTERSHIRE

Kevin Allen-Khimani and Krista Blair of Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL) provided a presentation on the work of VAL. During the presentation they made reference to the affect of funding cuts on particular groups within the community including children and young people, family support and cultural groups. It was also explained that the Community & Voluntary Sector was looking for new and innovative ways of funding itself including seeking a common solution and looking at ways of fund raising and marketing.

Mrs Sprason arrived at 6.35pm.

In response to Members' questions, Mr Allen-Khimani outlined the most popular training provided and also stated that VAL offered training to volunteers and support for carers, and also offered to put his training manager in touch with a Member who expressed an interest in workshops for his parish council regarding running schemes and managing volunteers.

It was suggested that personalisation could be researched as part of the forthcoming 'Care for the elderly' scrutiny review, and agreed that officers bring a report on the relationship with and performance of VAL to the next meeting of the Commission.

220 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

In presenting this report, Inspector Rich Ward and Sharon Stacey outlined the crime statistics since the last report and the successes of the Community Safety Partnership were highlighted. It was reported that this year's Christmas Campaign would be launched to coincide with the Christmas lights switch-on event. The increasing use of social media, the work undertaken in schools on bullying and hate crime, and the success of joint working with Blaby District Council were all outlined.

In response to Members' questions, the following points were noted:

- The fall in crime was more pronounced in this borough than in other areas of Leicestershire, to which the proactive approach, prevention work and cross-border working had contributed;
- The Community Safety Partnership had played an important role in the reduction of crime as a result of the initiatives;
- The problem of burglary from industrial estates had been due to travelling criminals stealing scrap metal as a result of the high prices for metal;
- Further work was required to emphasise to the public that the Community Safety Partnership covered Hinckley & Bosworth, not just Hinckley;
- Positive reports on crime reduction should be distributed to parish councils and that information should also be disseminated via the Parishes Forum and the Community Safety Forums;
- One of the barriers was the perception of crime amongst the elderly, despite the fact that crime had been reducing over the last 15 years;
- The Number Plate Automatic Recognition cameras which had been in operation in Earl Shilton had been very successful;
- The monthly open days at Burbage Police Station which coincided with the Farmers' Market had been very popular;
- The Neighbourhood Watch Scheme had proven very successful in Burbage, as a deterrent but also in detection of criminal intent;
- If vulnerable people were identified by the Police, referrals were made to the relevant agencies;
- The impact of the Police Commissioners was as yet unknown, but it was hoped that they would work with existing Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

A Member complimented the work of his local beat team, stating that they were very proactive, but also reactive, and they knew the area and residents well.

It was agreed that a further report would be brought to the Commission in six months.

221 PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT APPEAL DECISIONS

Members were presented with a report which provided an update on the outcome of planning and enforcement appeals since the last report in January 2011. It was reported that 12 appeals had been received, of which six had been dismissed, three withdrawn and three allowed.

With regard to the Leicester Road appeal, a Member expressed concern that the Green Wedge Review had been used in the appeal, but it hadn't yet been seen by Members. It was noted that it was in the Scrutiny Commission's work programme for the January meeting, but it was agreed to bring this forward to the December meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the report be noted;

- (ii) the Green Wedge Review be brought to the next meeting of the Commission.

222 S106 DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

The Scrutiny Commission received a report which provided the position in respect of the Section 106 contributions which had not been spent within the five year period and were therefore at risk of being clawed back by the developer.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

223 VEHICLES FOR SALE ON THE HIGHWAY

Following a request of the Commission, Member received a report which advised them of the different powers and responsibilities held by the Borough and County Councils in relation to vehicles for sale at the roadside. It was emphasised that private sellers with no more than two vehicles for sale were exempt. Members were informed that the Wardens were able to move abandoned and untaxed vehicles.

Mr Ladkin left the meeting at 8.01pm.

Local Members discussed the representations they had made regarding specific issues at Field Head, including having requested Traffic Regulation Orders. Concern was expressed that individual issues such as this one took up a lot of officer time and it was suggested that protocols be drawn up to address such situations.

224 SCRUTINY REVIEW: FUEL POVERTY

Officers presented some background information to assist with the Scrutiny Commission's Fuel Poverty review. It was suggested that the problem of fuel poverty would worsen further with the predicted energy price increases. Work carried out by the Private Sector Housing team was listed, including encouraging installation of cavity wall insulation and loft insulation.

It was stated that households spending more than 10% of their income on fuel were considered to be in fuel poverty. A Member asked how those who put up with the cold rather than spend more than 10% of their income on heating were identified.

Members acknowledged the problem for households with pre-pay meters as the fuel cost was higher for these, and there was no way of ensuring that charges were accurate.

The possibility of calling in representatives of energy companies, campaign groups and customers was discussed, and it was agreed that the review should be promoted and members of the public be asked to contact us if they spent more than 10% of their income on energy.

The problem of reaching all parts of the community with information on schemes available to them was raised, and it was agreed that consideration would be given to this as part of the review.

225 ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY UPDATE

Members received an update on the Anti Poverty Strategy, including hearing about the development of a joint reporting structure, and how many of the actions from the Action Plan had been incorporated into Service Improvement Plans throughout the authority.

Mrs Hall left that meeting at 8.40pm.

Members acknowledged the positive messages in the report, but expressed continued concern regarding doorstep lenders. In response Members were reassured that this would form part of the Community Safety Partnership's Christmas campaign.

Mrs Hall returned at 8.44pm.

Members expressed further concern regarding shops which encourage spending based on the offer of a payment or credit plan (and are now advertised in the media), and asked if it would be in this authority's remit to monitor such establishments. In response it was agreed that as it was a matter regarding the wellbeing of the community it was entirely within the authority's remit to take up concerns regarding these businesses.

RESOLVED – the report be noted and the recommendation to integrate the anti poverty strategy priorities and outcomes into service improvement and corporate plans be supported.

226 2013 BOUNDARY REVIEW

It was acknowledged that the boundary review at been discussed at some length at Council the same week and it was felt that all Members were aware of the proposals and were of the same mind about them therefore there was no need to discuss the specific details.

A Member informed the Commission that he had heard on the radio that workshops run by the Boundary Commission were being held earlier that day, and it was requested that the Boundary Commission be asked to put on a workshop for HBBC. The Chief Executive agreed to include the request in a letter he had drafted to the Boundary Commission which would be sent the following day. It was further noted that the three main political parties had made representations to the Boundary Commission on a regional basis.

227 SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2011-12

Consideration was given to the Scrutiny Commission Work Programme for 2011-12. It was agreed that the item on the Green Wedge policy which was scheduled for the January 2012 meeting be brought forward to December 2011.

RESOLVED – the work programme be agreed with the abovementioned amendment.

228 FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL DECISIONS

Members received the Forward Plan of Executive decisions for the period October 2011 to January 2012. It was acknowledged that as a living document, the plan had been updated since publication of the agenda. Concern was expressed that the results of the Site Allocations consultation were due to be published on the website in November, but that Members had not yet had sight of these. Members were reassured that they would have access to them before publication.

229 MATTERS FROM WHICH THE PUBLIC MAY BE EXCLUDED

On the motion of Mr Lay, seconded by Mrs Hall, 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 and 10 of Part I of Schedule 12A of that Act.

230 ALTERNATIVE DEPOT OPTIONS

Members were updated on progress to select an alternative depot site. It was reported that a site had not yet been agreed and that an update would be provided to the Scrutiny Commission in December and then to Council for approval.

(The Meeting closed at 9.02 pm)