

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

9 MAY 2013 AT 6.30 PM

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

Mr RG Allen (for Mr PR Batty), Mrs WA Hall, Mr MS Hulbert, Mr DW Inman,
Mr K Morrell, Mr K Nichols and Miss DM Taylor (for Mrs L Hodgkins)

Officers in attendance: Steve Atkinson, Rosemary Leach, Rebecca Owen, Caroline Roffey, Sally Smith and Sharon Stacey

495 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors Batty, Bessant and Hodgkins, with the substitution of Councillor Allen for Councillor Batty and Councillor Taylor for Councillor Hodgkins authorised in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.

496 MINUTES

On the motion of Councillor Nichols, seconded by Councillor Mr Hall, it was

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

497 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

498 DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

The Scrutiny Commission received a report and presentation which informed members of the progress made to improve the service delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). Tina Tinsley from the Papworth Trust, the new Home Improvement Agency procured jointly with the other Leicestershire authorities, gave a background to the organisation and the contract and explained the improvements that were being made to the DFG process. It had been proven that adaptations could prevent accidents, thereby saving the NHS more than the cost of the adaptations, yet the process for carrying out an adaptation was still extremely lengthy.

Concern was expressed that the time taken for the Occupational Therapist to assess and recommend works was lengthening the overall process, but also that when they recently cleared their backlog it caused delays along the whole process. In response it was noted that an independent report, commissioned by the District Councils' Network was, amongst other things, recommending the options of either moving the entire process to county councils or to districts. Members supported the suggestion to manage the process locally and agreed to include it as a recommendation.

RESOLVED -

- (i) the achievement of the Private Sector Housing Team in reducing the time taken to process grant applications whilst maintaining a high standard of delivery be noted;
- (ii) the impact of an aging population and the future demand for adaptations within HBBC be recognised;
- (iii) the lack of control / influence that HBBC has on the referral rate and criteria set by Leicestershire County Council Social Care Services (SCS) for the initial Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment be acknowledged;
- (iv) the work being undertaken to improve delivery time of DFG's and on the exploration of alternative solutions which allow for more timely installation of adaptations be supported;
- (v) the rigidity of the DFG process and the need to ensure flexible outputs be acknowledged;
- (vi) Papworth Trust Home Solutions (PTHS) be noted as the new Home Improvement Agency operating in Leicestershire.

RECOMMENDED – that officers pursue a recommendation emerging from research soon to be published by the District Councils' Network that integrated team working at locality level be explored for adoption.

499 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME 2013/2014

Members received the annual Environmental Improvement Programme report and a list of enhancement schemes recommended for implementation in 2013/14. Concern was expressed that there were more urban than rural schemes on the list, and in response it was noted that this was because the most recent Conservation Area Appraisals were in Hinckley and it was as a result of such appraisals that schemes were identified.

RESOLVED – the report be supported and RECOMMENDED to Council for approval.

500 PARISH & COMMUNITY INITIATIVE FUND

A report was presented to the Commission which recommended £80,562 in grants under the Parish & Community Initiative Fund. It was stated that since the report had been produced one of the schemes had obtained funding from elsewhere hence the higher figure in the original report. It was further noted that each scheme that had applied and had met the criteria had been allocated the requested funding, therefore an underspend of almost £20,000 had been recorded. It was recommended that this underspend be added to the authority's contribution to the super fast broadband project.

Whilst Members were disappointed that not all of the funding would be spent on the Parish & Community Initiative Fund, it was acknowledged that all eligible applications were recommended for approval and therefore any underspend was likely to be re-allocated as previous experience had proven that underspent funds carried forward were unlikely to be spent the following year due to the low number of applications.

Having given consideration to the recommendation, members were generally in support of re-allocating the underspend. However, they did not agree with the suggestion of committing some funding from the budget for 2014/15 to super fast broadband. They also requested reassurance that the money contributed by this authority to the broadband project would actually benefit residents of this borough and requested a report on the project to a future meeting.

RECOMMENDED –

- (i) the funding allocations be supported;
- (ii) the allocation of additional funding of £18,820 to super fast broadband from the 2013/14 underspend be supported;
- (iii) Executive be RECOMMENDED to not support the allocation of any funding from the 2014/15 budget to the super fast broadband project;
- (iv) a further report be submitted to the Commission on the proposed use of and benefits to rural areas of the Borough from this additional allocation.

501 REFLECTION OF BARWELL SUE APPLICATION PROCESS

The Chairman of the Barwell & Earl Shilton Scrutiny Group presented the processes undertaken and the views of the group regarding the process prior to the decision of the Planning Committee on the Barwell Sustainable Urban Extension. In particular, the following points were made during presentation and discussion thereon:

- The group had worked very well and constructively together;
- Leicestershire County Council Highways and the Developer's inputs had not been as helpful as hoped as there hadn't been sufficient time to consider the highways recommendations prior to the decision, as they had been received so late;
- Severn Trent Water had also been quite difficult to engage and had not carried through promises made;
- Staff in the Planning service were thanked for their support of the group.

Attention was drawn to the recommendations contained within the report which included the continuation of the Scrutiny Group to monitor the process of the application for the Earl Shilton Sustainable Urban Extension, avoiding over-development of flats, and procuring external legal advice again to ensure consistency with the Section 106 Agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy arrangements.

It was acknowledged that some recommendations were outside of the remit of the Barwell & Earl Shilton Scrutiny Group and the Scrutiny Commission and that they would be matters for determination by Council.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the Scrutiny Group continues to meet to monitor the application process for the Earl Shilton Sustainable Urban Extension;
- (ii) a close eye be kept on the proposed STW pipeline to ensure that it is completed in 2013 as promised so that no additional capacity is put on the Earl Shilton sewage systems or sewage works;

- (iii) it be RECOMMENDED that:
 - (a) traffic impact and traffic modelling assessments be put to public consultation as soon as possible following validation of the Earl Shilton SUE application;
 - (b) pre-application discussions take place with the developers to ensure that no more flats or apartments are built in Earl Shilton, unless the developers can prove that there is a need for them;
 - (c) external legal advice be sought, if necessary, to ensure the best financing of all infrastructure improvements by Section 106 Agreement or Community Infrastructure Levy.

502 MATTERS FROM WHICH THE PUBLIC MAY BE EXCLUDED

Due to the following item being withdrawn, it was not necessary to move into private session, the recommendation was therefore not put.

503 HINCKLEY CLUB FOR YOUNG PEOPLE - UPDATE

This report was deferred pending consideration by the Finance, Audit & Performance Committee in the first instance, coming to the Scrutiny Commission thereafter if necessary.

(The Meeting closed at 8.04 pm)

CHAIRMAN