

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

14 MARCH 2013 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr MR Lay - Chairman
Mr PAS Hall – Vice-Chairman

Mr PR Batty, Mr Bessant, Mrs WA Hall, Mrs L Hodgkins, Mr DW Inman, Mr K Nichols and Mrs S Sprason

Officers in attendance: Steve Atkinson, Storme Coop, Bill Cullen, Louisa Horton, Sanjiv Kohli, Tracy Miller, Robert Morgan, Claire Preston, Caroline Roffey, Sally Smith and Judith Sturley

451 MINUTES

On the motion of Councillor Nichols, seconded by Councillor Hodgkins, it was

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

452 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

Councillors Batty and Bessant arrived at 6.33pm.

453 SECTION 106 DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

Following concern expressed at a previous meeting, the situation with regard to two different Section 106 agreements was explained. It was reported that the delay in the Montgomery Road contribution was due to discussions surrounding the sports pavilion, and the position was clarified in respect of the Westfield Road contribution - that the development apparently had not commenced and, therefore, no contribution was owed to the Council. Any new application would be subject to a S106 discussion.

It was reported that more stringent and regular reviews were being put in place to prevent the situation recurring. It was suggested that better links with parish councils were needed, and that parish councils should be advised to put in place improved monitoring of section 106 monies.

It was agreed to have a further update on section 106 contributions in six months, but to have another report in the meantime, should any progress be made with regard to the Montgomery Road contributions.

454 ECONOMIC REGENERATION STRATEGY ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Members received an update on economic regeneration in and around the borough. During debate, the following were discussed:

- The physical access barrier to apprenticeships and need to consider transport issues;
- Work on broadband with Leicestershire County Council;
- The work of cross-border partnerships;

- The employment of apprentices within HBBC;
- The continually improving links with employers;
- The need to promote self employment to young people via schools.

It was agreed that future updates on the Strategy provide more detail on outcomes and impacts of the initiatives.

Members noted the report.

455 PLANNING POLICY UPDATE

Following a request for a report to update on planning policy matters, Members were informed of the stage of various documents including the Core Strategy, Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD, Earl Shilton and Barwell Area Action Plan and the Gypsy & Traveller DPD. Members were reminded of the new Neighbourhood Development Plan for Market Bosworth, which was to be the subject of consultation

There was discussion on the methodology of the Gypsy and Traveller revised needs assessment and which Members would be giving consideration to it, and in response it was explained that it would go to the Cross Party Senior Members' Group, prior to consideration by the Scrutiny Commission.

456 DOG FOULING AND ENFORCEMENT

Members were updated on the situation with regard to dog fouling and enforcement. The current campaigns were outlined and their success highlighted. It was stated that reports of dog fouling had decreased year on year for the last four years.

Members noted and welcomed the update on the actions being taken.

457 WELFARE REFORM AND IMPACT ON HBBC RESIDENTS

Members received an update on the welfare reforms, including a parliamentary letter which had added foster parents, members of the armed forces and families with severely disabled children to the list of those receiving exemptions from the reductions in benefits for having 'empty bedrooms'. It was also reported that around 20 households in the Borough had been identified as being affected by the benefit cap. The Discretionary Housing Payment fund was discussed, but it was noted that this was only a short term support of up to thirteen weeks.

Concern was expressed regarding many aspects of the changes, but in particular the fact that some disabled residents would have made adaptations to their properties at their own cost or a cost to the authority, but would now be penalised for remaining in them if they had an empty bedroom. It was requested that the authority write to the Government to express this concern, not only for the residents but also for the authority, which would have to pay for new adaptations in another property, should the resident be forced to move.

It was requested that a follow-up report be brought in six months.

RESOLVED –

- (i) representation be made to Government with regard to those with adapted properties;
- (ii) a further report be brought to the Commission in six months.

458 UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY CAPITAL PROJECTS

Members received an update on capital projects including Hinckley Hub, Atkins, the Jubilee building, the Bus Station development, the Leisure Centre and MIRA. It was reported that all offices in the Atkins building were fully let ahead of the Business Plan target; the Hub was on track for completion and staff relocation in May/June; administrative staff would soon be moving into the Jubilee building with operational staff two weeks later; a more detailed delivery programme for the bus station site would be available soon; there had been a lot of interest in the procurement process for the Leisure Centre on the Argents Mead site; and part of the RGF money for MIRA had been received and more detailed design work including the A5 upgrade was being procured.

It was agreed that the capital projects would be revisited when there was progress to report.

459 DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS - UPDATE

In response to concerns raised at the previous meeting, Members were reassured that the budget for disabled facilities grants had not, and was not planned to be reduced. It was agreed that a full report on grants and waiting lists would be brought to the next meeting.

460 DRAFT PROTOCOL BETWEEN THE POLICE & CRIME PANEL AND THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL SCRUTINY COMMISSION

The Commission was presented with Leicestershire County Council's draft protocol for its relationship with the Police and Crime Panel. Following discussion, Members felt that it would be more effective to continue the current relationship with the Community Safety Partnership and local police than to sign up to the county council's protocol to ensure HBBC retains a voice and can concentrate on actual outcomes of crime reduction work rather than analysing the relationship with partners and the Police & Crime Commissioner.

It was agreed that the Police & Crime Commissioner be invited to a future meeting.

461 SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was agreed as updated in previous items at this meeting.

462 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

At the conclusion of the meeting, it was agreed that the date of the next meeting be moved to 9 May 2013.

(The Meeting closed at 9.17 pm)

CHAIRMAN