

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

9 JUNE 2014 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr MR Lay - Chairman
Mr C Ladkin – Vice-Chairman

Mr PR Batty, Mr PAS Hall, Mrs L Hodgkins, Mr DW Inman, Mr JS Moore, Mr K Morrell,
Mr K Nichols and Mrs H Smith (for Mr Bessant)

Officers in attendance: Steve Atkinson, Bill Cullen, Simon D Jones, Sanjiv Kohli,
Rebecca Owen and Katherine Plummer

36 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf Councillors Bessant and Hulbert, with the substitution of Councillor Smith for Councillor Bessant authorised in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

38 HINCKLEY SQUASH & RACKETS CLUB

The Scrutiny Commission gave consideration to a report regarding the position of Hinckley Squash Club, which had been required to relocate as part of the Crescent regeneration scheme. It was reported that a site at Tungsten Park had been secured last year but that due to the commercial interest and popularity of the site the costs had escalated. It was reported that independent legal advice had been sought on the proposals.

Bob Jennings, Trustee of the Squash Club, explained the history of the club which had been in Hinckley for over 70 years and how it had secured major competition success. He described how the club operated currently and how the new building would be run. He answered members' questions regarding membership, pricing structure, accessibility, court hire and partnerships with schools. A key point was the Squash Club's commitment to making the new facility available for public and school use and an acceptance that there would be a Management agreement entered into with the Council to this effect. It was also noted that such arrangements would be based on Squash and Racket England's best practice advice.

One or two Members expressed concern regarding the input of the authority in order to allow an external organisation to avoid paying VAT. However, more generally, it was felt that it was in the local public interest to assist a local organisation in this way and ensured efficient use of funds available and that the local public would expect that of the Council. Squash England had confirmed that they would have more confidence in the new centre with the Council's involvement.

In response to a member's question regarding the cost of providing squash courts in the new leisure centre, members were reminded that none of the tenders proposed including squash courts, as they did not provide value for money in such a facility – they required large amounts of space for comparatively little return.

It was suggested that, as part of the report to Council, the benefit to the public of the arrangement be quantified, so that the value for money could be more openly assessed. Members were assured that costs were not coming from the Council's budget, but from the CPO compensation payable to the club by the Tin Hat Partnership.

Officers reported that an independent valuer had confirmed that the proposal provided value for money, and members asked that that report be made available to them.

It was asked that, if the council invests in the Squash Club, progress reports be brought back to the Finance, Audit & Performance Committee.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the public benefit of the arrangement be included in the report to Council;
- (ii) the valuation report be provided to members of the Commission;
- (iii) Council be RECOMMENDED to agree that, should the arrangement proceed, monitoring reports be taken to the Finance, Audit & Performance Committee.

(The Meeting closed at 7.25 pm)

CHAIRMAN