

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

17 JULY 2014 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr MR Lay - Chairman

Mr PR Batty, Mrs L Hodgkins, Mr MS Hulbert, Mr DW Inman, Mr R Mayne (for Mr JS Moore), Mr K Morrell, Mr K Nichols and Mrs J Richards (for Mr Bessant)

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

96 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bessant, Mr Hall, Ladkin and Moore, with the following substitutions authorised in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4:

Councillor Mayne for Councillor Moore
Councillor Richards for Councillor Bessant.

97 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

98 CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

The Scrutiny Commission was provided with a presentation on the key capital projects over the previous few years and also gave an update on those in progress. Amongst those mentioned were industrial estates, the Atkins Building, the Crescent, the Squash Club, the former depot site, Hinckley Hub, the Jubilee Building and the leisure centre. Officers also stated they were looking at the possibility of bringing some disused factories on Wood Street back into use in partnership with the ballet school, the college and Creative Hinckley.

In relation to the Crescent bus station development, it was reported that around 150 construction jobs would be created during the development, including locally recruited apprentices, and local art work would also be used in the development. Linked to the progress on this development was also Hinckley Squash Club, who had now been supported to find alternative accommodation.

It was noted that the site of the former Council depot on Middlefield Lane was being demolished and would soon be marketed for redevelopment. It was reported that the anticipated capital receipt was £2.2m.

With regard to the leisure centre, members were reminded that the plans had been amended to meet some of the requests received, including increased spectator seating and changing room capacity for the swimming pools. It was stated that an update on the leisure centre would be given under the next item of business. In response to a member's question, it was reported that the anticipated capital receipt on the site of the current leisure centre was £2m, but that this would depend on the market and its intended purpose. Members were assured that land valuations were undertaken regularly and re-assessed each time the MTFs was updated, and as such were the most up to date available.

It was reported that there was a 1% vacancy rate at the Hub and options for filling this were currently under discussion. In response to a member's question, it was noted that about a third of HBBC staff were home workers as this had not only reduced the space requirement in the Hub, but more importantly had been proven to improve performance and output.

99 LEISURE CENTRE

Members were informed that, whilst the original reason for calling this meeting was to provide an update on the leisure centre and report the findings of ground condition assessments following demolition of the former council offices, full information was not yet available in order to hold a full debate and therefore the Extraordinary council meeting scheduled for 29 July had been cancelled and a report on the leisure centre would be brought to a Scrutiny Commission in August and Council in early September.

It was explained that the tender process had been carried out on the basis of normal ground conditions, as was the standard context in such processes. Following the demolition of the former offices on Argents Mead, initial work had showed that the ground conditions were softer than 'normal' and gas had also been found on site. Whilst the levels of CO₂ found were not dangerous, it was felt that, as a public authority, there was a duty of care to neutralise the area.

Officers reported that, due to the ground conditions, piling would be necessary. Due to the historic nature of the area, the piling would be of low vibration due to its drilling style and the Environmental Health service was happy that it would not create excessive noise.

Members were reminded that there was a £0.5m contingency but that it was anticipated that the work required may exceed this. All figures would be brought to the August meeting.

It was agreed that a full report would be brought to the August meeting which would answer questions asked previously by members and asked of officers outside of the meeting as well as questions raised at this meeting, including:

- the suitability of the pool for competition;
- the additional complications due to the moveable floor;
- the extension of the current contract with SLM or operating of the current leisure centre by the new contractor.

It was noted that the relevant experts would be in attendance at the August meeting.

(The Meeting closed at 7.42 pm)

CHAIRMAN