

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

3 MARCH 2016 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr MR Lay - Chairman
Mr SL Bray and Mrs R Camamile – Vice-Chairman

Mr RG Allen, Mr DC Bill MBE, Mr WJ Crooks, Mr KWP Lynch, Mr SL Rooney,
Mr BE Sutton, Mr R Ward and Mr HG Williams

Also in attendance: Councillor RB Roberts

Officers in attendance: Bill Cullen, Simon D Jones, Julie Kenny, Graeme Law, Lindsay Orton and Rebecca Owen

424 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

It was noted that Cllr Williams would arrive late due to work commitments.

425 MINUTES

On the motion of Councillor Camamile, seconded by Councillor Sutton, it was

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

426 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

427 H&B TOURISM PARTNERSHIP 2015 - PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The Scrutiny Commission received a presentation on the work of the Hinckley & Bosworth Tourism Partnership by the Chair of the partnership, Sharon Redrobe. During discussion on the presentation, the following points were raised:

- The need to benefit from the legacy of the Richard III events as Leicester City Council had, and the impact of events outside of the city
- In relation to marking the site of the battle, it was noted that discussions were ongoing with the landowner and sources of possible funding were being identified
- The number of visitors to Market Bosworth to not only the Battlefield but also the marina and the waterpark
- The need to advertise and promote the area nationally, which was currently being reviewed
- The need to address the shortage of overnight accommodation in the borough.

Councillor Williams entered the meeting at 6.57pm.

In response to a member's question about what constituted a 'tourist', it was explained that this included holiday makers, day visitors, those visiting relatives in the area and those living in the borough.

The Chair of the partnership explained that she had been promoting the value of tourism within the LEP and it was now one of the priorities, but that there was a lack of funding available for projects.

Councillor Roberts left the meeting at 7.15pm.

428 PLANNING APPEALS

The Scrutiny Commission received a report on planning and enforcement appeal decisions over the previous six months. It was noted that this was a regular report which monitored and challenged performance in relation to decisions on planning applications and enforcement notices. It was noted that no costs had been awarded during the period covered by the report.

Members expressed concern about the situation where an applicant appeals against refusal of an application, the Inspector upholds the appeal and the authority has to pay costs, but then the applicant doesn't commence development, and it was felt that this was unfair. Officers agreed but also noted that the awarding of costs was to reimburse the applicant for money spent.

The current position in relation to the five year land supply was questioned, and it was noted that, when last assessed in October, it stood at 5.69 years. It was acknowledged that deliver of housing needed to continue to ensure the supply was maintained.

In relation to the Barwell Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE), it was noted that the development consortium was still in negotiation with Leicestershire County Council regarding contributions to transport, but that once resolved, the S106 would be signed.

In response to a question regarding an enforcement site at Leicester Road, Hinckley, officers agreed to circulate an update to the Commission.

Some members expressed the view that the Planning Committee was currently working very well which had contributed to effective decision making.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

429 HOUSING BILL UPDATE

The chairman reported on a meeting he had attended with Mr Tredinnick, MP, along with Councillors Bill and Hall and Sharon Stacey to express concerns in relation to the Housing Bill, particularly the impact of the rent reduction, the move to short term tenancies and the sale of high value voids.

The MP had indicated that the priority of the government was to encourage owner occupier status and not to encourage council housing, but it was acknowledged that the changes would have a huge impact on this, and most other, authorities.

During debate, the following requests were made:

- It was felt that the council should lobby at every stage of the process, including to the House of Lords
- A survey should be undertaken to ascertain whether the majority of people preferred to rent than own anyway. It was suggested that this consultation could take place alongside that on the Corporate Plan
- The representations that Cllr Sutton had made should be included in the authority's challenges
- The Scrutiny Commission be kept updated on progress.

Members were reminded that the Bill actually related to Housing *and* Planning, and it was questioned whether the council should challenge any aspects relating to planning. Members asked for a report on the implications of the planning aspects of the Bill.

RESOLVED –

- (i) Lobbying and pressure be maintained as the Bill progresses;
- (ii) The Scrutiny Commission be kept updated on progress;
- (iii) A further report on the planning aspects of the Bill be brought to a future meeting.

430 SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2015-17

The following items were requested for future meetings:

- Town centre car parking (next meeting)
- Insurance settlements, numbers and processes following the report in the Leicester Mercury where this authority appeared to have high costs. It was, however, noted that the figures printed had been incorrect and the printed correction had been unclear
- Update on dry recycling credits
- Take-up of the green waste service later in the year.

(The Meeting closed at 8.08 pm)

CHAIRMAN