

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

8 DECEMBER 2016 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr MR Lay - Chairman
Mrs R Camamile and Mr KWP Lynch – Vice-Chairman

Mr SL Bray, Mr WJ Crooks, Mrs L Hodgkins (for Mr DC Bill MBE), Mrs J Richards, Mr BE Sutton, Mr R Ward and Mr HG Williams

Also in attendance: Councillor M Hall and Councillor J Kirby

Officers in attendance: Steve Atkinson, Valerie Bunting, Edwina Grant, Julie Kenny, Lisa Kirby, Rebecca Owen, Caroline Roffey, Sharon Stacey, Clive Taylor and Ashley Wilson

272 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Prior to the commencement of the business on the agenda, the Chairman referred to this being the Chief Executive's last meeting of the Scrutiny Commission and thanked him for his support. The Commission echoed these comments.

273 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Bill with Councillor Hodgkins substituting in accordance with council procedure rule 4.

274 MINUTES

It was moved by Councillor Camamile, seconded by Councillor Crooks and

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

275 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

276 PRESENTATION FROM TOGETHER FOR TENANTS

Together for Tenants gave a presentation about the group and its work. Members welcomed the presentation and congratulated the representatives on the group's achievements. Members gave some suggestions for increasing membership of the group and asked that they be invited to meetings in their local area. It was agreed that representatives of Together for Tenants would be invited again in future to update on progress and achievements.

277 CLOCKWISE CREDIT UNION UPDATE

The Scrutiny Commission was updated on progress and impact of the local credit union provision. A member suggested that more contact could be made with parish councils to promote Clockwise and the following suggestions were made:

- representatives could attend the rural conference the following week
- information could be provided to parish councillors as well as clerks to share

- laminated notices could be put on parish noticeboards
- asking borough councillors to pass on the information when attending their local parish council meetings.

Members congratulated those involved on the success of the credit union and endorsed the report.

278 AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY

Members were informed of the delivery of affordable housing in the borough. During discussion, the following points were raised:

- The more proactive parish councils seemed to receive a greater proportion of affordable housing
- The recent scheme in Markfield had resulted not only in housing local people, but the repatriation of those who had had to leave Markfield previously
- The lack of protection against the risk of affordable housing being sold on at market value and no longer being affordable, except on rural exception sites
- The lack of protection in relation to resale of shared ownership properties, except on rural exception sites
- The improved housing market leading to fewer developers trying to reduce numbers of affordable housing based on viability
- The need to discourage developers from building certain styles of properties due to the risk of social landlords not bidding for the properties
- The notion of gifted units was supported.

A member asked how many of the 828 completions were still in the social rented sector, how many were in shared ownership, how many of those had been sold on and which housing associations were responsible for those properties. It was agreed that a report answering these questions would be brought to the April meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (i) The report be noted;
- (ii) The above requested report be brought to the April meeting of the Scrutiny Commission.

279 CAPACITY PRESSURES

Members received a report which requested additional capacity in the areas of private sector housing, town centre management, environmental enforcement, antisocial behaviour and domestic abuse.

In response to a member's question about the ASB officer post, it was noted that the funding of the post was split between the housing revenue account and general fund which reflected the demand on the post, but the post holder would be flexible between the two areas.

In relation to the Assistant Town Centre Manager posts, it was asked why there would be support for Earl Shilton, Barwell and Market Bosworth, but not Burbage. In response, it was explained that Hinckley was considered to be the local town centre for Burbage.

RESOLVED – the report be endorsed and costs be built into the budget for 2017/18 onwards.

280 CAPITAL PROJECTS AND MAJOR REGENERATION UPDATE

The Scrutiny Commission received an update on progress of the key capital and regeneration projects in the borough.

A member expressed concern about the impact of loss of revenue from the units in block C of the Crescent that were let later than projected. In response, it was acknowledged that the medium term financial strategy was constantly updating and the packages agreed with the tenants could offset the lower rental income.

In relation to the leisure centre, it was noted that the centre was performing well, although gym memberships were lower than anticipated due to competition with other local facilities.

In discussing the former leisure centre and Co-op sites, it was requested that ward members be kept informed of activity.

A member referred to paragraph 9.4 of the report and the comment about the potential for a healthcare facility or pub-restaurant in relation to Barwell SUE. He highlighted that these were two quite different uses and asked which it would be.

In relation to Ambion Court, it was confirmed that residents would be moved to other accommodation whilst the work was being undertaken. One to one meetings had taken place with all residents and their families to ensure all were supported during the move, which would be fully arranged and funded by the council.

A member referred to paragraph 3.5 of the report which stated that demolition of the former leisure centre was on programme and highlighted that completion was due in mid-November so had been delayed, whilst another member acknowledged that there had been a brief delay but congratulated the contractor on keeping residents informed and working hard to reduce disruption.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

281 ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Members were advised of the updated enforcement policy and procedures for the Clean Neighbourhoods team. During discussion and in response to questions, the following points were made:

- 20 people had responded to the consultation, and all responses had been supportive of the updated policy
- The public space protection order signs would be erected over the following week
- Work was undertaken with schools but officers hoped to expand this. The work was mostly with primary schools as their curriculum could accommodate this.

RESOLVED – the report be endorsed and the Executive be RECOMMENDED to approve the updated policy.

282 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

An update on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS) was provided to the Commission. It was noted that most other authorities in Leicestershire were recommending retention of the current maximum level of support. Members felt that we should be continuing to support the most vulnerable people and the current maximum level of 88% should be retained, as recommended by the Executive.

RESOLVED – Council be RECOMMENDED to retain the current maximum level of 88% support.

283 CORPORATE EQUALITIES

The Scrutiny Commission was advised of the current and planned actions of the Corporate Equalities' Steering Group and its refocus on the delivery of the Equality Policy. The significant progress made was acknowledged.

RESOLVED –

- (i) The achievements within the current action plan be noted;
- (ii) The refocus of the Corporate Equalities' Steering Group onto delivery of the Equality Policy be endorsed;
- (iii) The 2011 action plan be signed off as embedded practice;
- (iv) The Scrutiny Commission be the body charged with monitoring progress against the approved action plan.

284 LGA PEER CHALLENGE

Members received the formal report from the LGA Peer Challenge Team and were informed of the actions being taken in response to recommendations in the report. During discussion, the following points were raised:

- The report presented a positive reflection of officers, members and partners
- Whilst not mentioned in the report, the successes of the authority had been achieved despite a severe drop in government support
- The positive comments about overview and scrutiny were welcomed
- An increase in delegation to officers and members would be explored, although some members indicated they would not support this
- Whilst not a recommendation in the report, member training would be revisited and revitalised.

RESOLVED – the report be noted and welcomed and the action plan be endorsed.

285 SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2016-18

The work programme was agreed.

286 MINUTES OF FINANCE & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY

The minutes of Finance & Performance Scrutiny were noted.

(The Meeting closed at 8.35 pm)

CHAIRMAN