



Meeting: **Scrutiny Commission**

Date/Time: **Wednesday, 17 November 2021 at 10.00 am**

Location: **Sparkenhoe Committee Room, County Hall, Glenfield**

Contact: **Mrs J Twomey (Tel: 0116 305 2583)**

Email: **joanne.twomey@leics.gov.uk**

Membership

Mr. M. T. Mullaney CC (Chairman)
Mr. T. Barkley CC Mr. J. Morgan CC
Mrs. H. J. Fryer CC Mrs. R. Page CC
Mr. S. J. Galton CC Mr. T. J. Pendleton CC
Mr. T. Gillard CC Mr J. Poland CC
Mr. Max Hunt CC Mr. T. J. Richardson CC

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA PACK

<u>Item</u>		<u>Report by</u>	
8.	Engagement on the Council's Strategic Plan	Chief Executive	(Pages 17 - 66)

To enable consideration of the comments of the following Overview and Scrutiny Committees on their respective areas of the Strategic Plan, the minute extracts from the following meetings of these Committees are attached:

- Adults and Communities (meeting held on 1st November 2021)
- Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee (meeting held on 2nd November 2021)
- Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee (meeting held on 9 November 2021)
- Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (meeting held on 10th November 2021)
- Highway and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee (meeting held on 4th November 2021)

Mrs P. Posnett CC, Lead Member for Community and Staff Relations, has been invited to attend for this item.



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**ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 1 NOVEMBER 2021**

ENGAGEMENT ON THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

MINUTE EXTRACT

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to seek the Committee's views on the draft Strategic Plan (2022 – 26) as part of the 12-week public consultation period which commenced on 1 November 2021. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. P. Posnett CC, the Cabinet Lead Member for Community and Staff Relations, to the meeting for this item and invited her to introduce the item.

Regarding the Council's draft Strategic Plan, members made the following comments for consideration as part of the consultation:

- (i) Members commented that the reference to 'meeting the accommodation needs of disabled and frail people' in the 'Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure' outcome, sub-outcome 8.5, needed strengthening. It was highlighted that the availability of accessible accommodation was a key aspect of being able to live a healthy life, so the potential to make properties accessible in the early stages of property development was an important factor. Whilst the County Planning authority did not consider applications for housing, its role in influencing local planning processes and its potential to use its resources to develop start-up properties were significant. Mrs Posnett CC said that whilst it was not possible to expect developers to build full wet rooms in new properties, building 'housing for life' as an alternative (for example, providing easy access for wheelchair users and installing certain aids such as shower platforms) was something that she actively advocated for.
- (ii) The draft Strategic Plan used the term 'customers' to refer to service users and it was suggested that a different term should be used to make it clear that the Council was not a 'business'.
- (iii) In response to a question raised, it was clarified that the reference in paragraph 23 of the report, under the Resources Implications section, that 'all actions within the Plan are from existing service/business plans', related to the actions that the Council had committed itself to deliver during the course of the period the Plan covered i.e. 2022-2026. The main purpose of the Plan was to summarise the Council's strategic vision and aspirations in a

single document to identify specific priority areas of focus. The outcome aims set out in the Plan were made up of a combination of areas identified from the Council's existing strategies and other areas identified through additional performance analysis being undertaken.

- (iv) The geographical locations of libraries and heritage sites across the County was an important element of libraries being accessible. It was felt the distribution ought to be wider and not concentrated in certain areas so that all residents had a place nearby to where they resided, to visit.
- (v) Members noted that engagement on the draft Plan was taking place directly with local parish and town councils by way of newsletters and round robins. The option to meet and discuss their views directly with Council officers had also been given. Members further noted that Mrs Posnett engaged with local parish councils and other such organisations about community related matters as part her Cabinet Lead Member role. A member suggested that in terms of the wider public consultation advertising in the local newspapers that were delivered to residents free of charge could also be a good way to encourage people to submit their views.
- (vi) In response to a question raised, it was confirmed that having Cabinet Lead Member representation on the Strategic Plan Outcome Boards was something that would be considered.
- (vii) Given the progress being made by the Department to develop its digital offer to service users, it was suggested that 'Digital' should be more at the forefront of the document and that often family members managed a service users care via 'smart' devices which could also be referenced. Members noted that the 'Digital' theme ran throughout the Plan document and it was expected that the actions to tackle the issues associated with 'digital exclusion' would arise as the activities set to take place over the Plan period progressed.
- (viii) Members commented that the Plan was well written overall, and it was pleasing to see the outcomes that the Council would be working to achieve clearly set out in a single document.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the update on the work undertaken to review and refresh the Council's Strategic Plan be noted.
- (b) That the Chief Executive be requested to give consideration to the comments now raised as part of the consultation on the Council's Draft Strategic Plan (2022 – 2026).

**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 2 NOVEMBER 2021**

ENGAGEMENT ON THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

MINUTE EXTRACT

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive which presented the draft Strategic Plan for the period 2022-26. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

A twelve week public consultation had commenced on 1 November and this included an opportunity for Overview and Scrutiny Committees and key Partnership Boards to comment on the Plan. Findings from the consultation would be used to inform development of the final Plan. A report would be presented to the Scrutiny Commission in March 2022, followed by a report to the Cabinet presenting the outcome of the consultation and seeking agreement for the revised draft Plan to be submitted to the County Council for approval in May 2022.

The strategic outcomes in the Plan were intended to broadly reflect the remits of departments and the portfolios of lead members. Progress in delivering the outcomes would be monitored and the Committee would receive a quarterly update on the outcome most directly related to Children and Family Services.

Arising from the discussion, the following comments were raised:

- i) A member commented that more detail was required in the Plan around how outcomes would be achieved and it was agreed that more information would be provided on this.
- ii) In relation to sub-outcome 7.1, a query was raised around how collaboration between partners would be strengthened. The Director of Children and Family Services explained that this work was far reaching and linked to the Children and Families Partnership Plan. A number of actions were proposed, including strengthening pathways, continuing to work with families and strengthening the Children and Families Wellbeing Service. Key was ensuring that the focus of any work was achieving the right outcome for the child. A lot of work had been undertaken around issues relating to the youngest children and those who would benefit from additional support being identified at the earliest opportunity. It was acknowledged that the number of children taking up the free early education entitlement had decreased as a result of Covid-19 but work was now taking place to promote the benefits of early education.

- iii) A question was asked in relation to sub-outcome 7.2, in particular the building of new schools and the number of independent school places being funded by the County Council. The Director reported that there was a five year strategy for the provision of mainstream school places and the development of SEND provision, which had been included in the High Needs Plan. Over the last three years, £20m had been invested in SEND provision but it was acknowledged that more was still required. The Director stated that a number of independent school places were still used and although the preference was for children to attend a school within Leicestershire, key was ensuring that they were in an appropriate setting that met their needs.
- iv) In terms of EHCP processes, it was important to ensure that children's needs were clearly identified within a school setting as soon as possible so that the necessary support was provided in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice. A Multi-Agency Panel was now in place to determine whether it was appropriate to assess a child for an EHCP and where it was not agreed to undertake an assessment, other support was suggested. This process had led to more consistent decision making.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the update on the work undertaken on the Council's Strategic Plan be noted;
- b) That the Chief Executive be requested to consider the comments now raised as part of the consultation on the Council's draft Strategic Plan 2022-26.

**ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9 NOVEMBER 2021**

ENGAGEMENT ON THE STRATEGIC PLAN

MINUTE EXTRACT

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to seek the Committee's views on the draft Strategic Plan (2022-2026) as part of the 12-week public consultation period. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. P. Posnett CC, the Cabinet Lead Member for Community and Staff Relations, to the meeting for this item.

Arising from discussions the following points were noted:

- i) A concern was raised regarding the installation of new gas boilers under the Warm Home Grants. Officers agreed to clarify the matter with Public Health and provide more information on the programme, which was funded by Government.
- ii) Arising from a query on the lack of reference to wood burning stoves, Members were informed that the Strategic Plan was high-level and addressed such issues with an action that looked to influence communities to reduce their carbon emissions. Further detail on the Council's approach and the specific behaviours which it would aim to encourage within communities would be outlined in relevant supporting strategies underpinning the Strategic Plan, such as the Council's Environment Strategy.
- iii) In relation to the commitment to 'support environmentally sustainable farming practices that support the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity and the condition of natural capital features', Members queried how the Council would look to encourage this, noting the impact ploughing had on the release of carbon dioxide. The Lead Member for the Green Agenda stated that farms leased by the Council were tenanted, and that the Authority had a legal obligation to uphold its contracts. Whilst it was not considered appropriate to tell farmers how to farm on the land they leased, members were assured that officers in Corporate Property worked with farm tenants to consider their sustainable practices and how they could support the Council's Action for Nature plan.

- iv) Officers offered to meet with community groups and partners to go through the Strategic Plan if they wished. Furthermore, the online survey offered options which allowed responders to only answer on certain aspects which were of particular interest to them thereby minimising the burden on members of the public and encourage responses. Officers offered to develop an Executive Summary of the Plan.
- v) In response to a query about missing figures in section 5.4 of the sub-outcome to ensure the 'economy and infrastructure are low carbon and environmentally friendly', Members were informed that the figures related to the fact that while commercial CO2 emissions and industrial emissions had reduced significantly, transport emissions had not. Officers would add the missing figures to the Plan.
- vi) Regarding quality of water in waterways within the county, Members felt it was important that these were highlighted within the Plan, to ensure they were protected and looked after. It was noted the responsibility for water quality however rest with other agencies such as Environment Agency. Officers advised that they would aim to highlight the issue of waterway quality in the Plan.
- vii) The Council had a road map to achieve carbon neutrality from its own emissions by 2030, and wider Leicestershire emissions by 2045. Carbon neutrality meant that any CO2 released into the atmosphere was balanced by an equivalent amount being removed through initiatives such as tree planting.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the update on the work undertaken to review and refresh the Council's Strategic Plan be noted.
- (b) That the Chief Executive be requested to give consideration to the comments now raised as part of the consultation on the Council's Draft Strategic Plan (2022 – 2026).

**HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 10 NOVEMBER 2021**

ENGAGEMENT ON THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

MINUTE EXTRACT

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to seek the Committee's views on the draft Strategic Plan (2022 – 26) as part of the 12-week public consultation period which commenced on 1 November 2021. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussions the following points were noted:

- (i) Whilst the Strategic Plan contained specific Strategic Outcomes relating to health and keeping people safe and well, the work of the Public Health department linked in with many more of the Outcomes in the Plan not just those which specifically referred to health. For example, Public Health would be involved in partnership working with regards to domestic abuse, substance misuse, mental health and environment and transport. Whilst the County Council could achieve some of the aims in the Strategic Plan by itself others required working with partners such as District Councils, National Highways and the community sector.
- (ii) Some of the health related actions in the Strategic Plan would be fairly generic across County Councils however the Plan also included key aims and actions which were unique to Leicestershire.
- (iii) Concerns were raised by members that the 4 year period of the Strategic Plan was insufficient length to achieve some of the outcomes in the plan and the Council needed to plan much further ahead. In response it was explained that whilst the outcomes reflected the Council's long-term vision and aspirations, they were accompanied by specific aims which set out how the County Council would work towards achieving the outcomes over the following 4 years.
- (iv) The actions in the Strategic Plan were not exhaustive and as the 4 years went on departments would be asked to add in more actions to achieve the aims.
- (v) In response to concerns raised that the 12-month health checks for babies did not always take place, the Director of Public Health acknowledged that conversations needed to take place between the Public Health commissioning leads and Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust to resolve these issues.

- (vi) In response to concerns that public sports facilities were not always open, it was noted that those facilities were the responsibility of District Councils, but the County Council could play a role through Active Together in encouraging the public to undertake physical activity.
- (vii) The public needed to be as well informed as possible when making decisions so they understood the consequences of certain actions.
- (viii) The Strategic Plan set a target for the amount of disadvantaged adults in Leicestershire (e.g. those with learning disabilities, autism, and/or mental health conditions) who were in paid employment and living independently to exceed the national average, however members were of the view that this target was not ambitious enough and it was therefore agreed that further consideration would be given to how the target could be more ambitious.
- (ix) In response to a suggestion from members that other targets in the Plan should be made more specific such as by including quantitative figures it was agreed to incorporate quantitative targets where feasible.
- (x) Unpaid carers needed more help making their views known and consideration needed to be given to whether any advocacy work could be done on their behalf. In future this could be added as an additional action in the plan if it was deemed appropriate.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the update on the work undertaken to review and refresh the Council's Strategic Plan be noted.
- (b) That the Chief Executive be requested to give consideration to the comments now raised as part of the consultation on the Council's Draft Strategic Plan (2022 – 2026).

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 4 NOVEMBER 2021**

ENGAGEMENT ON THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

MINUTE EXTRACT

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to seek the Committee's views on the draft Strategic Plan (2022 – 26) as part of the 12-week public consultation period which commenced on 1 November 2021. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. P. Posnett CC, the Cabinet Lead Member for Community and Staff Relations, to the meeting for this item.

Arising from discussions the following points were noted:

- (i) Whilst members endorsed the ambitions set out in the Strategic Plan, they raised concerns that the funding was not available to match those ambitions.
- (ii) Members were of the view that some of the aims in the Strategic Plan were in opposition to each other, for example the plan to increase cycling and walking conflicted with the major road programme which would increase traffic. In response members were referred to section 5.4 of the Strategic Plan which set out how the local economy would be decarbonised.
- (iii) The Strategic Plan was a living document and could be updated as time went on to reflect the difficulties bus operators were facing as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and whether that situation improved or not.
- (iv) The Director undertook to speak to Mr D. Bill CC regarding his concerns about the Council's response to the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan 2020-2039.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the update on the work undertaken to review and refresh the Council's Strategic Plan be noted.
- (b) That the Chief Executive be requested to give consideration to the comments now raised as part of the consultation on the Council's Draft Strategic Plan (2022 – 2026).

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