

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 28 March 2007.

PRESENT

Dr. M. O'Callaghan CC (Chairman)

Mr. J. G. Coxon CC
Mr. S. J. Galton CC
Mr. Mike Jones CC
Mr. J.S. Moore CC
Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC

Mr. R. Fraser CC
Mr. D. W. Houseman CC
Mr. John Legrys CC
Mr. P. C. Osborne CC
Mr. E. D. Snartt CC

By Invitation.

Chief Superintendent I. Stripp – Leicestershire Constabulary.

110. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th February, 2007 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

111. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 35.

112. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

113. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.

There were no declarations made by members.

114. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

The following members declared personal non-prejudicial interest as members of District Councils in relation to Item 8 – Overview of the Safer Communities Theme of the Local Area Agreement:-

Dr. Hill, Mr. Coxon, Mr. Galton, Mr. Houseman, Mr. Jones, Mr. Shepherd and Mr. Snartt.

115. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 36.

116. Overview of the Safer Communities Theme of the Local Area Agreement

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive on the progress to date in achieving the outcomes of the targets set out in the Local Area Agreement Safer Communities theme. A copy of the report marked 'A' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Chief Superintendent Ian Stripp.

In response to question, the Commission was advised as follows:-

- The target for reducing the overall crime was a concern and could be deemed to be red rather than amber. In response a project group comprising senior officers of key agencies had been established to support the Charnwood CDRP and to identify possible strategies that might be pursued to achieve the target reduction. That project group was intended as a time-limited exercise to bring about change and it was expected that lessons could be learnt for other areas;
- The Constabulary recognised the need to ensure that all complaints were dealt with appropriately as information from the public was vital to tackling crime and antisocial behaviour.
- The Constabulary was pursuing a neighbourhood strategy aimed at providing a local beat officer and PCSO in each neighbourhood. The Constabulary welcomed the decision of the County Council and its partners through the LAA to pursue a neighbourhood policy and would seek to link its activities with those of the LAA. Discussions at neighbourhood level had led to a valuable exchange of views between agencies as to appropriate action for tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.
- The need for diversionary activity for young people was recognised. To that end targeted Youth Work Support funded through the County Council's Youth Crime Prevention Budget was being reviewed to ensure greater focus and the wider review of the Youth Service taking place would consider the possibility of more targeted Youth work services.

RESOLVED

That progress to date in achieving outcomes and meeting targets to help Safer Communities in the priority neighbourhoods be noted.

117. Youth Justice Plan 2007/08

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the Draft Youth Justice Plan for 2007/08 and seeking their views of the Commission thereon. A copy of the report marked 'B' is filed with these

minutes.

In response to questions the Commission was advised as follows:

- There was a close working relationship between the Youth Offending Service and the Student Support Service; two members of staff from the Student Support Service were seconded to the Youth Offending Service;
- Despite continuing improvements in performance towards the Education, Training and Employment target of 90% of young people in full-time education, training or employment, further improvement was still needed, particularly in relation to 16 and 17 year olds. The Service was working closely with Connexions to try and achieve this.
- The target in relation to reduction in re-offending rates of 5% by 2007/08 compared to 2002/3 had been exceeded and the Service was currently achieving a reduction in excess of 11%;
- Consideration would be given in future years to producing a plan which did not necessarily follow the national template;

Members of the Commission welcomed the Plan and, in particular, the achievements against the Key Performance Indicators outlined on pages 7, 8 and 9 of the report which had resulted in the Youth Offending Service being recognised as one of the best performing Youth Offending Teams in the country for Key Performance Indicators and preventative work.

RESOLVED

That the Plan and the performance of the Youth Offending Service be commended.

118. Revenue Budget 2006/07 Monitoring Report

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Resources producing information on the 2006/07 budget based on the pattern of income and expenditure for the 10 months of the financial year. A copy of the report marked 'C' is filed with these minutes.

The Director of Resources advised members that the outturn figures would need to reflect the following major changes:

- The financial arrangements that had been agreed by the Cabinet to support the Primary Care Trust;
- The outcome of the agreement on Job Evaluation;
- Provision for the impact of the current audit on equal pay;
- Possible utilisation of the Sure Start Grant for other aspects of the CYPS budget.

At this point of the meeting, Mr. Legrys declared a personal non-prejudicial

interest in relation to the outcome of the negotiation on Job Evaluation as a member of a recognised trade union.

In response to a question the Director of Resources indicated that the Authority was investigating the possibility of providing financial and non-financial performance data in the same document as this would enable members to see whether underspending had impacted on service delivery and performance.

RESOLVED

That the outcome of the latest budget monitoring exercise be noted.

119. Fourth Review of the 2006/07 Capital Programme

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Resources concerning progress on the annual capital programme 2006/07. A copy of the report marked 'D' is filed with these minutes.

Members were advised that the review of the property management function was aimed at improving efficiency through managing assets corporately.

With regard to the development of school led schemes, the Property Services Section would either provide a service directly to schools or advise on the options available in relation to engaging an external consultants or contractors.

In response to concerns expressed as to the availability of in-house services, the Director of Resources emphasised that the decision as to whether or not to make use of the service was entirely a matter for individual schools.

RESOLVED

That the good progress being made in delivering the Annual Capital Programme be noted.

120. Medium Term Financial Strategy - Decision Making Process and Scrutiny.

The Commission considered this matter the Chairman having decided it was of urgent nature in order to seek clarification of the process to be followed in relation to the implementation of decisions arising from the Medium Term Financial Strategy and scrutiny thereof.

The Commission considered a briefing note prepared by the Head of Legal Services which outlined the issues in relation to scrutiny of decisions which fell to be made as a result of decisions taken by the County Council on the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Members noted the difficulties facing officers in identifying clearly those issues meriting attention by scrutiny members which, although not falling within the definition of a key decision may be for other reasons deemed to be of significance. It was noted that members of scrutiny had a key role to play in identifying those issues. As part of the process of scrutinising the Medium Term Financial Strategy consideration needed to be given to identifying means within the reporting of budget options of identifying the likely long term

implications in terms of staffing and service provision.

RESOLVED:-

That the Director of Resources be asked to report to the next meeting on possible means of improving the information available to members regarding budget options to enable members to identify those issues which they consider would merit further scrutiny.

121. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting be held on Wednesday, 25 April 2005 at 2.00 p.m.

28th March 2007
2.00 pm – 4.05 pm

CHAIRMAN

