

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 25 April 2007.

PRESENT

Dr. M. O'Callaghan CC (Chairman)

Mr. J. G. Coxon CC  
Mr. S. J. Galton CC  
Mr. D. W. Houseman CC  
Mr. John Legrys CC  
Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC

Mr. R. Fraser CC  
Dr. S. Hill CC  
Mr. Mike Jones CC  
Mr. P. C. Osborne CC  
Mr. E. D. Snartt CC

By Invitation.

Mrs. L.A.S. Pendleton – Cabinet Lead Member for Rural Affairs and Tourism and Chairman of the Leicestershire Rural Partnership – for minute 130.

Mr. M. Peters – Leicestershire Promotions – for minute number 128.

Mr. P. Durban – Leicestershire Economic Partnership – for minute number 129.

122. Minutes.

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

123. Question Time.

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

124. 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).

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

The following members declared personal non-prejudicial interest as members of District Councils in relation to Item 8 – Overview of the Economic Development and Enterprise Block of the Local Area Agreement:-

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

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

There were no declarations of the party whip.

127. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

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

128. LeicesterShire Promotions.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr. Martin Peters, the Chief Executive of LeicesterShire Promotions.

The Commission received a PowerPoint presentation from Mr. Peters on the aims of the Company and the results achieved to date. A copy of the slides used in the presentation are filed with these minutes.

In response to questions from members, Mr. Peters advised the Commission as follows:-

- (i) LeicesterShire Promotions was unique in the East Midlands as the only Destination Management Organisation (DMO) which dealt with tourism as well as inward investment.
- (ii) In 2005/06 Leicester and Leicestershire attracted some 40% of the inward investment into the region;
- (iii) It was recognised that sports and sporting events were an important promotional tool and that the County and City had some excellent facilities. The 2012 Olympics also offered opportunities which would be exploited;
- (iv) Whilst LeicesterShire Promotions did explore opportunities of attracting film and television producers which in turn promote attractions in the County, much of this activity was now undertaken by East Midlands Media.
- (vi) Four of the seven District Councils (North West Leicestershire, Melton, Charnwood and Hinckley and Bosworth) contributed to LeicesterShire Promotions. It was understood that Harborough District Council was considering whether to contribute to the Company.

## RESOLVED:

- (a) That presentation and information now provided be noted;
- (b) That the Chief Executive be asked to circulate a briefing note to members of the Commission outlining the County Council's service agreement with LeicesterShire Promotions including the key Performance Indicators.

129. Overview of the Economic Development and Enterprise Block 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 Economic Development and Enterprise Block. A copy of the report marked 'A' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr. P. Durban of the LeicesterShire Economic Partnership.

In response to questions members were advised as follows:-

- (i) Although the inclusion of a housing provision target was expected to be mandatory, this target would need to take account of the local circumstances affecting the delivery and phasing of housebuilding;
- (ii) The updated figures of performance against targets had only recently been received and these were as follows:-

<u>Performance Indicators</u>	<u>Lead Partner</u>	<u>Target 2006/7</u>	<u>Actual 2006/7</u>
IB Claimants into employment less than 16 hours for 13 consecutive weeks.	Leics County Council	33	23
IB Claimants into employment for 16 hours or more for 13 consecutive weeks.	Leics County Council	45	13
Number of new business start-ups in Leicestershire.	Business Link Leicestershire	480	490
Number of adults gaining a NVQ level 2 qualification (City and County).	Learning & Skills Council	5000	5236
Number of businesses attracted (City and County).	LeicesterShire Promotions	10	7
Number of jobs created and safeguarded (City and County).	LeicesterShire Promotions	800	1016
Number of accredited tourism businesses (City and County).	LeicesterShire Promotions	150	212

Members of the Commission expressed concern that there was a lack of information available on the work of the different agencies and partnerships involved with the County Council in delivering the LAA. Members also expressed concern that the format of the report, whilst appropriate for reporting to GOEM, did not offer information in a form that would enable members to get a clear view of what was being done by the respective agencies and partnerships to deliver the targets and commitments and the value added by the LAA process.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the information now provided be noted;
- (b) That the officers be asked to have regard to the comments now made regarding the future format of reports on performance against commitments and targets in the LAA;
- (c) That details of the seventeen priority towns and village centres and the user satisfaction report referred to in paragraph 4 of Appendix 2 of the report be circulated to members of the Commission.

130. Review of the Leicestershire Rural Strategy 2007-2014.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the draft Revised Rural Strategy prepared by the Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP). A copy of the report marked 'B' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mrs. L.A.S. Pendleton CC, the Cabinet Lead Member for Rural Affairs and Tourism and the Chairman of the Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP).

In the ensuing discussion the following points were made:-

- (i) the LRP Board had recognised the difficulties posed by applying planning policy guidance to rural regeneration scheme. The Board would be discussing this issue at its next meeting with a view to seeking to influence future Supplementary Planning Documents;
- (ii) the revised strategy would be aligned to the Local Area Agreement as this would enable a smoother and potentially increased level of funding for rural projects;
- (iii) the LRP acted primarily as a 'champion' for rural areas. Whilst it did undertake work directly, much of its activity was to support and influence the activities of other agencies and to seek to 'rural proof' key strategies. The LRP had also levered in some £2.5million of funding in recent years.

The Chairman advised the Commission that this would be the last meeting Mr. Tom Gill, the County Council's Rural Policy Officer, would be attending. He thanked Tom for his hard work and for raising the profile of rural issues in Leicestershire and wished him well for the future. Members of the Commission echoed the Chairman's remarks.

RESOLVED:

That the draft revised Leicestershire Rural Strategy be noted and supported.

131. Leicestershire Domestic Violence Strategy 2007-2008.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the draft Domestic Violence Strategy 2007-08. A copy of the report marked 'C' is filed with these minutes.

In response to comments, the Commission was advised as follows:

- (i) the Strategy would be re-titled as the Domestic Violence Reduction Strategy;
- (ii) reference would be made within the Strategy to the work of the Probation and Youth Offending Service with the perpetrators of domestic violence;
- (iii) reference would also be made in the Strategy to the support given to women's refuges.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet be advised that the Commission supports and welcomes the draft Domestic Violence Strategy.

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

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning the scrutiny of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. A copy of the report marked 'D' is filed with these minutes.

In the ensuing discussion members acknowledge that they had a key role in the process and that that could best be undertaken by the Chairmen and Spokesmen of the relevant Committees meeting with the officers to discuss the budget proposals in detail and identifying relevant issues for scrutiny.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

133. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting of the Commission be held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday 20 June 2007.



