

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday, 14 December 2006.

PRESENT

Mr. Mike Jones CC (Deputy Chairman – in the Chair)

Mr. J. G. Coxon CC
Dr. S. Hill CC
Mr. John Legrys CC
Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC
Mr. C. A. Stanley CC

Mr. S. J. Galton CC
Mr. D. W. Houseman CC
Mr. P. C. Osborne CC
Mr. E. D. Snartt CC

69. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2006 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

70. Question Time.

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

71. 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).

72. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items.

73. Declarations of interest in respect of items on this agenda.

The following members declared personal non-prejudicial interests in relation to the item on the Regional Plan as members of District Councils:

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

74. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

There were no declarations made under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

75. Presentation of petitions under Standing Order 36.

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

76. Regional Plan.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the East Midlands Regional Plan issued by the East Midlands Regional Assembly and the County Council's response thereto. A copy of the report marked 'A' is filed with these minutes.

In response to comments and questions the Commission was advised as follows:

- (i) the County Council's advice now included reference to the need to identify strategic employment sites and it was hoped the Regional Assembly would incorporate these in the Plan prior to its examination in public;
- (ii) the process for developing the Regional Plan was 'top-down' and the imposed timetable had caused some difficulties particularly in terms of developing proposals within appropriate timescales so as to allow for consultation with districts and other partners. However, within these constraints strong efforts had been made to involve district councils and other partners.
- (iii) the submission to the Regional Assembly would include the caveats concerning the proposed new distribution of housing as outlined in paragraph 97 of the report.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That it be noted the County Council's comments on the Regional Plan would have substantial implications for District Councils, other partners and residents;
- (b) That the County Council's response to the Regional Assembly should acknowledge the point made in (a) above and should therefore seek an assurance from the Assembly to undertake a further round of consultation including with District Councils, other partners and residents prior to the public examination of the plan.
- (c) That the comments submitted should emphasise that:
 - (i) whilst the work undertaken so far indicated there may be scope to accommodate Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUE's) for some locations the risk of error is relatively high and further work will be necessary to ensure the case for the location of a SUE is robust and sustainable;
 - (ii) a firmer phasing policy is required in relation to managing the release of land for housing and setting out district housing

provision by five year periods would be a more robust approach and should be adopted;

- (iii) a considerable amount of further work is needed before the other elements of the County Council's advice could be confirmed.
- (d) That the Cabinet be advised it is the view of the Commission that the current strategic planning policies should, wherever possible, be amended to achieve the aspirations of ensuring that infrastructure requirements are planned for and agreed prior to approval of major housing schemes.

77. Leicestershire Together - Role and Outcome of Peer Review.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the role, structure and membership of the Leicestershire Together Board. The report also outlined the outcome of the recent Peer Challenge and the action plan being developed to implement the recommendations arising from the Peer Challenge. A copy of the report marked 'B' is filed with these minutes.

Members expressed some concern that the membership of the Leicestershire Together Board appeared to be dominated by members of the County Council.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That a further report be submitted to a future meeting on:
 - (i) the progress made in implementing changes to reflect the recommendations of the Peer Challenge Review;
 - (ii) service outcomes directly attributable to the work of the Leicestershire Together Board.

78. Local Area Agreement - Scrutiny Arrangements and Update on Progress

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning:

- (i) the views of the Scrutiny Reference Group on proposed arrangements for scrutiny of the LAA;
- (ii) an update on the self assessment of performance for the first six months of the LAA.

A copy of the report marked 'C' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the good progress being made on the LAA be noted.
- (b) That the proposals put forward by the Scrutiny Reference Group for scrutiny of the LAA be supported on the understanding that District

Council representatives will be invited to attend scrutiny meetings as non-voting members.

[At this point the Chairman, Mr. Jones, left the meeting and Mr. Galton was elected Chairman for the remainder of the meeting]

Mr Galton CC - in the Chair.

79. Progress on Commitments in the Annual Plan 2006/7.

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Resources outlining progress against the commitments and performance indicator targets in the Annual Plan 2006/7. A copy of the report marked 'D' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the good progress being made on the commitments and performance indicator targets in the Annual Plan be noted.

80. Corporate Asset Management Plan - Progress Report.

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Resources concerning progress being made with the implementation of the Corporate Asset Management Plan (CAMP). A copy of the report marked 'E' is filed with these minutes.

In response to questions the Commission was advised that the proposed changes to the management of the property function would deliver cashable efficiency savings over the coming years.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and that a further progress report be submitted in twelve months' time.

81. Final Report of the Scrutiny Review Panel on Scrutiny Support.

The Commission considered the final report and recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Panel on scrutiny support. A copy of the report marked 'F' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the findings of the Scrutiny Review Panel on Scrutiny Support be endorsed.

82. Date of Next Meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting of the Commission be held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday
31 January 2007.

10.00 am – 12.05 pm
14 December 2006

CHAIRMAN