

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 20 June 2007.

PRESENT

Dr. M. O'Callaghan CC (Chairman)

Mr. A. D. Bailey CC
Mr. G. A. Hart CC
Mr. P.G. Lewis CC
Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC
Mr. C. A. Stanley CC

Mr. S. J. Galton CC
Mr. D. W. Houseman CC
Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC
Mr. E. D. Snartt CC

1. Appointment of Deputy Chairman.

It was moved, seconded and carried:-

That Mr D R Bown CC be appointed Deputy Chairman for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2008.

2. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2007 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

3. Question Time.

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

4. 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).

5. Urgent Items.

There were no other items of urgent business.

6. Declarations of interest.

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no declarations of the party whip.

8. Presentation of Petitions.

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

9. Annual Plan (Best Value Performance Plan) 2007-08.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the County Council's Annual Plan (Best Value Performance Plan) for the period 2007/08. A copy of the report marked 'A' is filed with these minutes. The Commission was advised of a number of changes in the performance data figures contained in the Plan and a paper listing the changes is also filed with these minutes.

The Commission was advised that:-

- i) The nationally commissioned MORI Residents' Satisfaction survey had shown that despite high levels of satisfaction in service scores the overall satisfaction rate with the Council as a whole had fallen. This was in line with national trends. It was also recognised that face to face interviews produced higher ratings than the questionnaire used in the survey, which may also have confused County and District responsibilities. Locally, a key factor that may have impacted on the survey results was the issue of concessionary travel which was prominent in the press at the time of the survey. This was also felt to have impacted on 'bus' and public transport information ratings. The County Council had commissioned MORI to undertake further work with a view to understanding the reasons for such results. At the request of members, the Chief Executive agreed to ask MORI whether an analysis of responses could be undertaken based on District areas. The outcome of the further work would be reported to members in due course;
- ii) CPA judgements and star ratings did not always correlate with satisfaction rates. The Council recognised that a programme of change and continuous improvement was necessary to secure consistently high ratings;
- iii) Price Waterhouse Coopers provides a database of achievements against performance indicators which in some cases enabled the County Council to assess whether the targets it set itself were challenging;
- iv) The County Council was working closely with Loughborough University, emda and other regional partners in seeking to ensure that the opportunities offered by the 2012 Olympics are maximised. It was expected that the Regional Strategy would be available in the Autumn and this, together with the expected announcement in

November of the location of training camps, would provide the basis for further planning.

- v) The County Council had achieved high scores in corporate assessments and service inspections. Inspectors and Assessors had encouraged the County Council to publicise its achievements widely. Members had a role to ensure that this message was made known in their electoral divisions.

With regard to the specific targets within the Plan falling within the remit of the Commission, members were advised as follows:-

- BV2a the target set to achieve Level 5 of the Equality Standard for Local Government in a relatively short timescale had been recognised as too ambitious. Whilst the County Council had fallen short of its target it was still amongst the top 25% of authorities;
- BV174 the reasons for the drop in racial incidents particularly in schools may in part be the result of under reporting. Further work was needed to ascertain the reasons for this drop;
- BV4 It was recognised that further consideration needed to be given to the handling of complaints. It was however difficult to ascertain what proportion of those expressing dissatisfaction could be attributed to the outcome rather than the process;
- BV126 The outcome of the work of the multi agency project board established to identify strategies for reducing domestic burglaries in the Charnwood area was increasingly positive and would be reported to members in due course.

RESOLVED

- a) That the contents of the Annual Plan (Best Value Performance Plan) 2007/08 be supported;
- b) That each Scrutiny Committee be asked to consider in detail those performance indicators within their area of activity which have not met the target and to satisfy themselves of the reasons for the underperformance;
- c) That the officers responsible for producing the Annual Plan and performance data be thanked for their work.

10. Annual Report on behalf of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The Commission considered a draft report to be submitted to the County Council appending the Annual Report on behalf of Overview and Scrutiny Committees for 2006/07. A copy of the report marked 'B' is filed with these minutes.

The Commission also considered a supplementary paper which set out a brief summary of the work of the Scrutiny Review Panels. This supplementary paper was to replace page 5 of the Annual Report. A copy of the supplementary paper is also filed with these minutes.

In the discussion, members commented that reference needed to be made to the role of District and Parish Councils in the emerging Community Forums.

RESOLVED:

That the draft Annual Report on behalf of Overview and Scrutiny Committees be approved subject to amendments being made to reflect comments now made.

11. Date of future meetings.

RESOLVED:

That the following dates be agreed for future meetings for the Commission for 2007/08.

(All meetings commence at 2.00 p.m.)

18 July 2007
5 September 2007
7 November 2007
19 December 2007
30 January 2008 (provisional – budget meeting)
27 February 2008
2 April 2008

2.00pm – 4.35pm
20th June 2007

CHAIRMAN

