

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 18 July 2007.

PRESENT

Dr. M. O'Callaghan CC (Chairman)

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

Mr. R. Fraser CC  
Mr. G. A. Hart CC  
Mr. J.S. Moore CC  
Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC  
Mr. R. M. Wilson CC

12. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2007 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

13. Question Time.

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

14. 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).

15. Urgent items.

The Chairman advised the Commission that he had agreed to consider the following issues as matters of urgent business:

- Predetermination of issues at Scrutiny Bodies.
- Update on Scrutiny Matters.

16. Declarations of interest.

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no declarations of the party whip.

18. Presentation of Petitions.

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

19. Revenue Outturn 2006/07.

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning the revenue outturn for 2006/07 and the implications thereof for the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). A copy of the report marked 'B' is filed with these minutes.

In response to questions and comments the Director advised as follows:-

- (i) where it was clear that underspendings in the current year were on-going these were taken out of the base budget for the next and subsequent years;
- (ii) the underspendings in the current year had been allocated to general and earmarked reserves. A report on the level of funds and the need for holding earmarked reserves could be provided if required;
- (iii) details of the carry forwards agreed under delegated powers would be circulated to members separately;
- (iv) further information would be circulated to members regarding the overspend on the School Food Support Service and the carry forward of £200,000 for the establishment of Extra Care Schemes and developments of other alternatives to residential care.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Revenue Outturn for 2005/06 including the carry forwards agreed by the Cabinet be noted.
- (b) That the Director of Corporate Resources be requested to submit a report to the next meeting of the Commission on the need for, and the level of, earmarked reserves.

20. Capital Outturn 2006/07.

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning the key achievements in terms of capital investment in 2006/07 and summarising the capital outturn with explanations for variations from the original programme. A copy of the report marked 'C' is filed with these minutes.

Members welcomed the improved performance and the achievement of a 94% overall spend. Concerns were expressed at the poor performance of some departments and in particular the Adult Social Care Service which had only achieved a 40% spend.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the capital outturn for 2006/07 be noted.
- (b) That the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee be requested to investigate the reasons for the poor performance and in particular the process and rigour applied in formulating the Adult Social Care Capital Programme.

21. Annual Treasury Management Report 2006/07.

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning the action taken and performance achieved in respect of treasury management activities of the Council in 2006/07. A copy of the report marked 'D' is filed with these minutes.

Members were advised that given the scale of recent interest rate increases it was unlikely that the previous good performance, in relation to the benchmark, could be maintained.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and the Commission's appreciation be conveyed to Mr Colin Pratt, the County Council's Investment Manager and his Team.

22. Revenue Budget and Performance Monitoring 2007/08.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources which provided an early indication of any major issues on both the revenue budget and a key performance indicator where performance was below target significantly in 2006/07. A copy of the report marked 'E' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That the approach of combining the monitoring of the revenue budget with key performance indicators be welcomed.

23. Preliminary Review of the 2007/08 Capital Programme.

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which provided an early indication of major issues with the delivery of the 2007/08 Capital Programme. A copy of the report marked 'F' is filed with these minutes.

In response to questions, the Director undertook to provide members with details of the Care Home Improvement grants from the Department of Health and ensure that a report is submitted to the relevant Committee on the impact of the main contractor for the Bosworth Battlefield Visitor Centre going into liquidation.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

24. Pre-determination of Issues at Scrutiny Bodies.

The Commission considered this matter, the Chairman having decided it was of an urgent nature, in view of the concerns of members of scrutiny bodies regarding any comments that they might make on an issue which might then prevent them from voting on that issue at a subsequent stage.

The Chief Executive advised that the new Code of Conduct had recently been considered by the Standards Committee and that detailed guidance on the Code was being prepared for all members.

RESOLVED:

That the concerns now expressed be drawn to the attention of the Monitoring Officer with a request that these be addressed in the detailed guidance to be issued to elected members on the operation of the new Code of Conduct.

25. Update on Scrutiny Matters.

The Commission considered this matter, the Chairman having decided it was of an urgent nature, in view of the need to update members on the discussions between the Chairmen of all Scrutiny Committees and the Scrutiny Reference Group.

The Commission was advised as follows:

- (i) the Chairman and Spokesmen of the Commission would be meeting the Leader and appropriate members of the Executive on 7 August;
- (ii) Scrutiny Committee Chairman and Spokesmen were being advised to arrange regular meetings with the relevant Cabinet Lead Member and Chief Officer in order to keep abreast of current developments and to plan and manage the agenda for forthcoming meetings.
- (iii) a review of scrutiny would be undertaken by Jessica Crowe, Executive Director of the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CFPS) and Mr Steve Nicklen, of the Local Government Leadership Centre and a meeting had been arranged for them to meet the Chairman and Spokesmen of the Scrutiny Commission to agree the scope of the review.

RESOLVED:

That the update now provided be noted.



