

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 5 September 2007.

PRESENT

Dr. M. O'Callaghan CC (in the Chair)

Mr. G. A. Boulter CC
Mr. R. Fraser CC
Mr. D. W. Houseman CC
Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC
Mr. E. D. Snartt CC

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

26. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2007 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

27. Question Time.

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

28. 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).

29. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

30. Declarations of interest.

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no declarations of the party whip.

32. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

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

33. Planning Process for 2008/09

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources concerning the proposed arrangements for financial and

performance planning for 2008/09. A copy of the report marked 'A' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following principal points were raised:-

- Early identification of the priorities for Leicestershire was important as this would allow for a degree of influence over the LAA targets. This would be undertaken by both Leicestershire Together and individually by the partnership organisations. In the case of the County Council, this would involve consultation with both Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committees.
- It would be helpful for members to know the timing of the consultation period and the dates of the Scrutiny Committee meetings where the Sustainable Community Strategy would be considered. It would also be helpful for the timetable to include the dates of briefing meetings.
- The detailed budget for 2008/09 would be able to be determined on time. However, it might be necessary to revisit the Medium Term Financial Strategy later in the year, depending on the content of the final version of the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- Partnership working would become more important and was becoming increasingly relevant in assessments and inspections of the performance of authorities. It might be appropriate in the future to combine elements of the County Council's budget with that of partner organisations.
- The Sustainable Community Strategy would be an agenda item for the first meetings of the Community Forums. Forum members would be able to comment on the priorities for Leicestershire with regard to the specific area they represented.
- County Council members would be able to play an active part in the process of developing the Sustainable Community Strategy through Scrutiny Committees and Community Forums.
- The Citizens' Panel would be included in consultation on the Sustainable Community Strategy. Questions for members of the public would also be included in the next edition of Leicestershire Matters. It was felt that it would be useful for members to have the opportunity to comment on the consultation and questions before publication.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That officers be requested to provide a further report on progress with the planning process at the next meeting of the Commission;
- (c) That a detailed timetable of the planning arrangements be produced and circulated to all members of the Commission;
- (d) That members of the Commission be provided with prior notification of any questions that are to be used in consultation exercises as part of the

planning process.

34. Corporate ICT Strategy Implementation Progress Report

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning the progress being made in implementing the corporate ICT Strategy. A copy of the report marked 'B' is filed with these minutes.

In response to questions, the Commission was advised that the majority of outcomes were being met. Any slippage was not considered to be significant. It would be helpful to have a 'traffic light' system to illustrate the level of progress more clearly.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That the Director of Corporate Resources be requested to provide a further report on progress with implementing the Corporate ICT Strategy to a future meeting of the Commission;
- (c) That the Chairman of the Commission and Mr D W Houseman CC be asked to meet with appropriate officers to explore issues of specific relevance to elected members.

35. Use of Earmarked Reserves

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which set out the current position on earmarked reserves including justification for the levels of reserves. A copy of the report marked 'C' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion the following principal points were raised:-

- It was felt that the current level of reserves was pitched correctly. It was recognised that the County Council was facing a period of change and it was likely that this would cause a number of reserves to fluctuate.
- It was suggested that a review of the industrial properties held by the County Council be undertaken. This should identify the objectives for holding industrial properties and how this policy contributed to industrial development in Leicestershire. Initial discussion would identify whether a review panel was necessary or whether a briefing paper presented to the Chairman and Spokesmen of the Commission would cover the relevant points.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That Mr Sheahan CC meet with officers to discuss the potential of a review of industrial properties owned by the County Council.

36. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday 7 November at 2pm.

3.00 - 4.15 pm
05 September 2007

CHAIRMAN