

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 27 March 2013.

PRESENT

Mr. S. J. Galton CC (in the Chair)

Mr. G. A. Boulter CC  
Mrs. R. Camamile CC  
Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC  
Mr. T. Gillard CC  
Mr. G. A. Hart CC  
Dr. S. Hill CC

Mr. D. Jennings CC  
Mr. A. M. Kershaw CC  
Mr. W. Liquorish JP CC  
Ms. Betty Newton CC  
Mr. P. C. Osborne CC  
Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC

341. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

342. Question Time.

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

343. Questions asked by members.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

344. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

345. Declarations of Interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

346. Declarations of the Party Whip.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

347. Presentation of Petitions.

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

348. Draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2013/14.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the Draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2013/14. A copy of the report, marked 'B', is filed with these minutes. It was noted that the Plan would be submitted to the Cabinet on 9 April, prior to approval at the full County Council meeting, provisionally set for 26 June.

The Chief Executive reported that the Youth Offending Service had experienced a 6.4% reduction in funding during 2012/13 and a 6.1% reduction in 2013/14. With regard to the funds transferring to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), the Commissioner had indicated that he intended to treat the first half of 2013/14 as a "transition period", offering all current providers of community safety services funding for the first six months while he evaluated the services offered. The Youth Offending Service would be putting forward a robust case to the PCC to demonstrate it provided value for money.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were noted:

- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) had carried out an inspection of the Service in February 2012 and found that it was performing to a level that required "moderate" improvement. A robust action plan had been produced and worked through to enable the Service to act on HMIP's recommendations;
- The Basic Skills Team had operated for 8 years, providing additional educational services to young people. This Service had now ceased and support was being provided to ensure that young people had transport and access to the services provided by alternative providers;
- The IMPACT Team would experience a £55,000 budget reduction in 2015/16. Every effort was being made to ensure that this would not impact the quality of the services offered. The majority of the reductions would be harnessed through a reduction in the number of areas the Team could work in;
- It was regrettable that the Service had not met its targets for putting young offenders in full-time education/training. Work was being carried out to re-assess how this area was measured, as it was felt that at present, the number of young offenders in full-time education or training was not being reflected accurately. In particular, it was felt that there should be some mention of apprenticeships, as full-time education was known not to suit all;
- At present, there was a lack of figures in the Plan which made assessing the value of percentage-based targets difficult to interpret. No justification had been given for lowering the nationally set target for getting 90% of young people in education, training or employment (referred to on page 6 of the Plan) to a locally set target of 80%. It was felt that it would be helpful to include the reasoning behind this change and how Leicestershire's local target compared with those of other local authorities. Officers acknowledged these points;

- The £39,000 of delegated funding from the PCC had helped to fund Substance Misuse Workers. Information had been passed on to the PCC explaining the value of this work and why it should be retained beyond 2013/14, though further research work would be carried out to assess the “social return” of this work through interviews with service users.

Members asked that the outcomes of the research work on the role carried out by Substance Misuse Workers and the business case for the retention of other funding transferred to the PCC be submitted to the Commission at the appropriate time.

RESOLVED:

That the comments now made be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 9 April.

349. Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2012/13.

The Commission considered a report of the Scrutiny Commissioners concerning the Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2012/13. A copy of the report, marked ‘C’, is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2012/13 be approved for submission to the full County Council at its meeting provisionally set for 26 June.

350. Item for Information: A City Deal for Leicester and Leicestershire.

The Commission considered a briefing note of the Chief Executive concerning the City Deal for Leicester and Leicestershire. A copy of the briefing note, marked ‘D’, is filed with these minutes.

There was some concern expressed at the possibility of powers for planning moving from district councils to a “combined authority”.

It was clear that the governance arrangements of the City Deal were in the very early stages and it was expected that more information would become clear soon. It would therefore be important to follow up on the progress of the City Deal following the May elections. The possibility of inviting a Wave 1 City Deal authority to a workshop session to learn of their experiences with the process was suggested as a possible way forward.

RESOLVED:

That the briefing paper be noted.

351. Date of next meeting.

It was NOTED that the next meeting of the Commission had provisionally been scheduled for 5 June at 2.00pm. The date might be subject to change due to the proximity of the County Council elections.

2.00 pm - 2.50 pm  
27 March 2013

CHAIRMAN