

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 30 April 2014.

PRESENT

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

Mrs. R. Camamile CC
Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC
Mr. S. J. Hampson CC
Dr. S. Hill CC
Mr. Max Hunt CC

Mr. A. M. Kershaw CC
Mr. P. G. Lewis CC
Mr. K. W. P. Lynch CC
Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC
Mr. L. Spence CC

In Attendance:

Mr. L. Yates CC, Local Member for Glenfields (for Minute 93)

Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Corporate Resources and Transformation (for Minutes 94 and 95)

Mr. J. T. Orson JP CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Community Safety (for Minute 96)

87. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 March were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

88. Question Time.

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

89. Questions asked by members.

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

90. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

91. 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.

Mr. L. Spence CC declared a personal interest in respect of Item 11, Home to School Transport, as a school governor (Minute 97 refers).

92. Declarations of the Party Whip.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

93. Presentation of Petition: Request for children to be allowed to continue their education at their local County Catchment Secondary School with transport costs provided where this falls outside the 3 mile distance.

A petition submitted signed by 1385 local residents was presented to the Commission by Mr. L. Yates CC, the local County Councillor for Glenfields, requesting that children be allowed to continue their education at their local County catchment secondary school with transport costs provided where this fell outside the 3 mile distance.

With the consent of the Chairman, Mr. Yates addressed the Commission and asked whether Central Government was likely to change primary legislation or provide additional funds to local authorities for school transport. Mr. Yates noted that, since compiling the petition, the Council had agreed to consult further on a policy which would include provision of free school transport to the nearest suitable Leicestershire School and he welcomed this change. This consultation process started on 28 April and was due to finish on 15 June (Minute 97 also refers).

The Director reported that there were no indications that Central Government intended to change the primary legislation on school transport, nor was there any indication that additional funding would be provided. He reminded members that there were no reductions to Home to School Transport funding in the Council's current Medium Term Financial Strategy.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the petition be considered as part of the new consultation process on Home to School Transport Policy;
- (b) That the Director be asked to have regard to the petition in his report on the outcome of the consultation process, which was due to be submitted to the Commission at a meeting in July.

94. Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan 2014-18.

The Commission considered a supplementary joint report of the Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources to the Cabinet concerning the County Council's Strategic Plan 2014-18 and the Transformation Programme. A copy of the report is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman explained that, as the Strategic Plan would be a key part of the Council's Policy Framework, it would be subject to approval by the Full County Council at its meeting scheduled for 21 May. Accordingly, it was necessary to consider the Plan separate to the Transformation Programme.

The Chief Executive reported that the Strategic Plan aligned with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and would be the key means through which the Council would be directing its resources in future to achieve the priorities it had set. In view of its alignment with the MTFS, there were no specific resource implications attached to the Plan, though the implementation of it would be dependent on securing funding from a

number of external sources. There were therefore risks attached to the successful delivery of the Plan. The Plan was part of a suite of strategic documents, including the Transformation Programme and a new “Communities Strategy”, which was expected to be published for consultation in July.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting the Cabinet Lead Member for Corporate Resources and Transformation, Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC. Mr. Rhodes explained that the Plan would govern the ongoing work of the Council in a significantly challenging financial landscape.

Arising from the comments of members, the following points were noted:

- As the Plan was high level, it did not contain detailed actions which would be carried out to achieve all the targets set. These were often set out in more detailed existing supporting plans, such as the Local Transport Implementation Plan, or would be included in plans still in development which would support delivery and transformation;
- It was felt that it would be helpful to set out the current performance level of the Council, where available, alongside the targets set out in the Plan, though it was noted that some of the measures were new and specific baselines were therefore not yet available. It was intended to build further information into performance reports when 2013/14 data was available in early Autumn 2014;
- Performance against the targets would be closely monitored over the next three to four years and reported to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees and to the County Council in the Annual Performance Report;
- Targets had been developed as a result of analysis of comparable data at other local authorities and statistical trends both locally and nationally. The Council aimed broadly to be in the top quartile on the priorities set, though it was noted that some of the targets set out in the Plan would be challenging to achieve. In a few of the lower performing areas, the target was to make significant progress but it was noted that this would not be sufficient for top quartile performance at this stage;
- It was noted that the Council’s movement toward the “Digital Delivery” of its services would need to have regard to those members of the community without access to the internet. The importance of good quality telephony services was therefore stressed;
- It was noted that reference on page 18 to ensuring that “90% plus of Leicestershire premises” had access to super-fast broadband should be amended to “92%” as specified in the table further down the page. Further plans were progressing to stretch this coverage further and the Chief Executive undertook to consider how this would be reflected in the Plan;
- It was noted that the reference on page 37 to the Leicestershire Cultural Environment largely referred to libraries and museums but that there were other important cultural elements to Leicestershire. One example was given of the Council’s work with the Leicester-shire Music Education Hub to provide music tuition at Leicestershire Schools. It was acknowledged that this and other cultural services contributed to culture in the County and people’s general happiness and

wellbeing;

- The cross-party Elected Member Transformation Board had initially been looking at the challenges facing the Council, though it was now more focused around developing solutions to the commitments made in the MTFs. It was hoped that the opposition groups would continue to take the opportunity to play an active role in the Board and feel able to submit their ideas;
- The detail of the Better Care Fund Plan delivery and proposals to better integrate health and social care were still being developed through a new Integration Executive. It was hoped that some of this work could contribute towards taking pressure off the NHS by taking low priority patients away from accident and emergency services and into GP surgeries and other community services.

RESOLVED:

That the comments made on the Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan as outlined above be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 6 May and to the Full County Council for consideration at its meeting on 21 May.

95. County Council Transformation Programme.

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning the County Council's Transformation Programme. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 9", is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting the Cabinet Lead Member for Corporate Resources and Transformation, Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC, who was present to respond to any questions members had on the report.

The Director of Corporate Resources delivered a brief presentation on the Transformation Programme and how it was expected to be delivered. A copy of the slides forming the presentation is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the presentation, the following points were noted:

- The opportunity to maximise income generation through traded services was welcomed. A Scrutiny Review Panel had been established to look at this area and was due to commence its work in June;
- It was important that the Council was realistic with the public about the services it would be providing going forward. The Council had been required to identify a structure that would enable it to deliver effective and good value services with the significantly reduced resources it now had;
- Some concerns were raised in relation to the rationalisation of domiciliary care providers (as referred to in page 10 of the document) and the effect this might have on standards of service as a result of reduced competition;
- It was felt that Overview and Scrutiny had a role to play in contributing ideas to the transformation agenda through, for instance, Scrutiny Review Panels. One example was given in relation to assisting in devising a model for the service delivery of Community Libraries. It was noted that the Chairman had requested further

discussions with Group Leaders in regard to the contribution Overview and Scrutiny could make to the Transformation agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the comments now made as outlined above be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 6 May.

96. Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services concerning the work taking place to implement the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Crime and Policing Act 2014 across the County. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 10", is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting the Cabinet Lead Member for Community Safety, Mr. J. T. Orson JP CC who introduced the report by stating that the Act aimed to simplify the tools available to deal with ASB and speed up the process for victims and witnesses. He added that Elected Members would be trained on the Act and that this training would be rolled out across the districts.

Arising from a discussion, the following points were noted:

- The County Council was taking a lead role in ensuring that the infrastructure was in place to implement the Act. This had involved joint-working with Leicestershire Police and other partners;
- It was important that it was made clear amongst partners from the outset whose funds would be required to implement the different tools contained within the Act;
- The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) had recently commenced a public consultation exercise seeking views on the Community Remedy – a new power to deal with low level crime, such as minor criminal damage which can be settled out-of-court with the agreement of the person affected, the perpetrator and the police – which would influence how he would exercise this power;
- The Police and Crime Panel would be holding the PCC to account on the work his Office was currently engaged in in regard to victim support and restorative justice.

RESOLVED:

That the measures being taken to implement the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 be supported.

97. Home to School Transport Policy.

The Commission considered a consultation document in relation to the further round of consultation on the Council's Policy for Home to School Transport. A copy of the consultation document is filed with these minutes.

The Director of Environment and Transport reported the following:

- The Government had introduced academies and free schools, a more autonomous school system, over which the Council had no control. There was an added complexity in Leicestershire because there were two age ranges at primary level and three age ranges at secondary level. It was stressed that a clear and transparent Home to School Transport Policy was therefore required, that recognised the complex and changing picture in education;
- The second public consultation process had commenced on 28 April and would end on 15 June. Officers would be analysing the results of the consultation exercise and would be providing a report to the Commission at a meeting on a date to be confirmed in July, at which its comments could be agreed for submission to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 15 July;
- It was noted that it had been challenging to set out a Policy that both protected the financial interests of the Council and was clear and understandable for parents. The consultation exercise was web-based, though it was known that some public meetings had been arranged to discuss the proposed Policy and the Council would make every attempt to ensure officers were available to respond to any questions raised.

RESOLVED:

That the commencement of the Home to School Transport policy consultation exercise be noted and that a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission be arranged to enable it to submit comments on the proposals to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 15 July.

98. Date of next meeting.

It was NOTED that the next meeting of the Commission would be held on 4 June with a session with the Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Partnership and Leicester Shire Promotions Limited taking place at 10.00am and a full meeting taking place at 2.00pm.

2.00 - 4.10 pm
30 April 2014

CHAIRMAN